

LONGINUS

On the SUBLIME

Kitab Mahal Series on English Literature

GUIDE
TO
LONGINUS

On The Sublime

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INTRODUCTION TO LONGINUS

After Plato and Aristotle, the greatest Greek critic is Longinus. His treatise *On the Sublime* is of fundamental importance in the history of criticism as here he presents himself as the first romantic critic. It shows an approach radically different from either Plato's or Aristotle's. The author whose identity is not known is generally referred to as Longinus, and his work has long been known as *Longinus on the Sublime*. He may have been Cassius Longinus of Palmyra, who lived in the third century A.D. or may be somebody else who lived perhaps in the first century A.D.

The importance of Longinus lies in the fact that he asked different questions from those asked by Plato or Aristotle. He was more concerned with the peculiar effect that poetry exercises on its readers by rousing their passions. He knew of Plato's and Aristotle's view that poetry yielded a peculiar pleasure of its own. He also knew Horace's idea that poetry instructs, delights and persuades. He knew of a great poet like Homer's gift of making men glad ; of a great dramatist like Aristophane's power "to make men better in some respects" ; and finally of the rhetorician's gift to persuade men by means of harmonious language and most skilfully arranged argument. But from his personal experience, Longinus feels that great literature does something more than merely instructing, delighting and persuading ; there was something in the experience of literature which was beyond the scope of this formula.

Being a student of Plato he must have recalled that passage in the *Ion* where Plato gives expression to his Theory of Inspirations :

> "The Muse first of all inspires men herself...........For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed. And as the Corybantian

> revellers when they dance are not in their right mind, so the lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains. For the poet is a light-winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him; when he has not attained to this state, he is powerless and unable to utter his oracles."

It was on the basis of his theory that the poet is an inspired person who utters forth song when he is not in his right mind, that Plato condemned him as an irrational person who by appealing to the emotions of people misleads them, taking the same stand, and believing in the theory of inspiration that the poet is a "possessed" person, discovered that it is here that the strange power of the poet and his art lies. He did not try to probe the source of the power, but was more concerned with its effect on the audience or readers. He found that the highest type of poetry, which is lofty and sublime, has the effect not of mere pleasure or persuasion, but of ecstasy, and transport—"lifting out of oneself". This passion, intensity, exaltation, trasport was the fundamental condition of the sublimity in literature. Giving his definition of the sublime in literature, Longinus says:

> "The Sublime consists in a certain loftiness and consummateness of language, and it is by this and this only that the greatest poets and prose-writers have won pre-eminence and lasting fame."

And he goes on:

> "For a work of genius does not aim at persuasion, but ecstasy—or lifting the reader out of himself. The wonder of it, wherever it appears, startles us; it prevails where the persuasive or agreeable may fail, for persuasion depends mainly on ourselves, but there is no fighting against the

sovereignty of genius. It imposes its irresistible will upon us all.

> "Where there is only skill in invention and laborious arrangement of matter, a whole treatise, let alone a sentence or two, will scarcely avail to throw light on a subject. But the Sublime at the critical moment shoots forth and tears the whole thing to pieces like a thunderbolt, and in a flash reveals all the author's power."

This discovery of Longinus that great literature transports, and that this sublime effect of literature is attained, not by argument but by revelation or illumination, is the first "effective" theory of literature. According to Longinus, the value of a work of literature is assessed by introspection on the part of the reader ; if he is carried away, transported, moved to ecstasy by the grandeur and passion of the work, then the work is good. Now because this sensation of being moved and transported is enjoyable, and because it results from nobility and grandeur in a work of literature, Longinus connects the pleasures of literature to the highest human faculties. The Greek word *Sublime* can be translated in English as *height or elevation*, and the qualities which are associated with literature are capable of instantaneously creating in the reader a sense of being carried to new heights of passionate experience. According to Longinus, the greatest virtue of a piece of literature is sublimity. It is this virtue which makes a work truly impressive in spite of certain minor defects in it. And to be sublime is the ultimate justification and function of literature.

Proceeding further Longinus explains that great literature is that which has power of exciting and arousing the reader not only once but repeatedly. Moreover, it should produce this impression among men "of different pursuits, lives, ambitions, ages and languages." Only then its greatness is beyond question. Though being the first romantic critic, Longinus did not plead for licence, but tried to impose classical discipline on the poets as well

as critics. Just as he laid down for the critic that "the judgment of literature in the long-delayed reward of much endeavour", so he also insisted that the poet must study to master the technique of his art. "Nature", it is true, is the first thing. Nature must "supply". But Nature cannot dispense with Art, whose function is to "regulate". He wants that even the greatest of poets who are endowed with poetic genius of the highest order, should also be cautious that no blunders may creep in their writing even from oversight. Speaking of Homer he says that he has "observed not a few errors in Homer and the other great writers" and hastens to add that he is "not in the least pleased with such blunders". He warns the poets against the use of bombast, affectation and conceits, and reminds them that these defects can be traced to one common cause—"pursuit of novelty in thought—an orgy in which the present generation revels." He also insists on the choice of words, the ornament of style and dignity of composition.

But after discussing these external trappings of literature, Longinus comes back to his main point that a literary work can be considered great only by its effects on the reader of moving him to passionate excitement. He repeats his assertion : "I would confidently affirm that nothing makes so much for grandeur as a true emotion in the right place, for it inspires the words, as it were, with a wild gust of mad enthusiasm and fills them with mad frenzy." The purpose of literature is to move, excite, elevate, transport, and it is the duty of the critic to see how this is achieved by showing which elements are best suited to produce this result. Believing that a great writer must have genuine nobility of soul, Longinus also pointed out : "It is impossible that those whose lives are trivial and servile should flash out anything wonderful and worthy of immortality." Milton later expressed the same view when he said : "He who would not be frustrated of hope to write well ought himself to be a great poet ; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourable things".

After discussing the nature of sublimity in literature, Longinus turns his attention to the sources of Sublime. The

sources of the sublime can be understood under five heads: Grandeur of Thought, Capacity for Strong Emotion, Appropriate Use of Figures, Nobility of Diction, and Dignity of Composition. These are the five factors of a sublime literature. Any piece of literature which does not possess these five elements, is not a sublime literature; then, it shall not be able to move or uplift or transport the heart of the reader.

By the term "grandeur of thought" he means that the thoughts of the author must be noble. The element of decency should be there in them. For this, the author should be living on the higher plane of life. By living a mean and servile life, no writer can produce sublime thoughts in his literary work. Longinus says that "sublimity is the echo of greatness of soul......It is impossible for those whose whole lives are full of mean and dirty ideas and habits, to produce anything that is admirable and worthy of an immortal life. It is only natural that great accent should fall from the lips of those whose thoughts belong to the loftiest minds. Mostly the thoughts of the writer are natural, yet they can also be acquired by proper discipline —chiefly by dwelling constantly on whatever is noble and sublime and by follwing the example of great masters." Explaining the latter Longinus says, "It is good for us, too, when we are working at some subject which demands sublimity of thought and expression, to have some idea in our minds as to how Homer might have expressed the same thought how Plato or Demosthenes would have raised it to the sublime, or, in history, Thucydides. Emulation will bring those great examples before our eyes, illumining our path and lifting up our souls to the high standard of perfection, imaged on our minds." In thus linking sublimity of expression with sublimity of thought, Longinus assigns a higher purpose to the resulting "transport" than would appear at first sight.

The second source of sublimity in literature is the capacity for strong emotions. He says, "I would confidently affirm that nothing makes so much for grandeur as true

emotion in the right place, for it inspires the words, as it were, with a wild gust of mad enthusiasm and fills them with divine frenzy." On account of this reason Longinus prefers *Iliad* to the *Odyssey* and Demosthenes to Cicero. And, as the loftiest and finest thoughts dwell in loftiest soul, so strong emotions also dwell in the same kind of souls. As a matter of fact, lofty thoughts come in the mind when the feelings and emotions are lofty. But the emotions must be true ; they should not be merely fictitious but should convey the truth of life. Here Longinus disagrees with Plato that emotions have got an immoral appeal. But, on the other hand, Longinus believes that in the hands of Homer and Demosthenes, they uplift our soul and mind. Aristotle justifies them with their cathartic or purging effect, but Longinus considers them primarily for their aesthetic value. They cause aesthetic transport, although this transport may ultimately be found to be morally uplifting. Therefore, artistically Longinus's explanation of emotional appeal of literature is higher than that of Aristotle.

The figures of speech play an important part in making a sublime piece of literature. Longinus's primary concern is oratory in which happy or unhappy use of figures of speech makes all the difference. But he considers them chiefly for the part they play 'in producing grandeur' ; with their other effects he is not much concerned. Sometimes the figures of speech confuse and raise suspicion in the mind of the reader, but this handicap disappears in a style that is already elevated. That means, that elevated style makes the figures also elevated and heightens their effect. Therefore, a figure which is effective produces grandeur only when it is shaded by the brilliance of style.

After discussing the above sources of sublimity, Longinus turns his attention to the nobility of diction which includes, firstly the choice of words and secondly the use of metaphors and ornamented language. Words, when suitable and striking, he says, have "a moving and seductive effect" upon the reader and are the first things in a style

to lend it "grandeur, beauty and mellowness, dignity, force, power, and a sort of glittering charm." It is they that breathe voice into dead things. They are "the very light of thought"—a radiance that illumines the innermost recesses of the writer's mind. But "it should be noted that imposing language is not suitable for every occasion. When the object is trivial, to invest it with grand and stately words would have the same effect as putting a full-size tragic mask on the head of a little child."

Lastly, Longinus considers the arrangements of words. It should be one that blends thought, emotion, figures, and words themselves—the preceding four elements of sublimity—into a harmonious whole. Such an arrangement has not only "a natural power of persuasion and of giving pleasure, but also the marvellous power of exalting the soul and swaying the heart of men." It makes the hearer or reader share the emotions of the speaker. But "if the elements of grandeur be separated from one another, the sublimity is scattered and made to vanish, but when organised into a compact system and still further encircles in a chain of hormony, they gain a living voice by being merely rounded into a period."

From what has been stated above it is clear that Longinus was a great original critic, who discovered something new and different from what Plato and Aristotle had discovered. He succeeded in opening men's eyes to new aspects of literature. His manner of presenting his point of view is also enthusiastic, subjective and lively—features which are not present in the works of earlier critics. His great treatise *On the Sublime* is characterised by sincerity, generosity of judgment and scholarly modesty. It shows also the author's directness of vision and an instinct for seeking the basic principles of literature.

The greatest contribution of Longinus as a critic was that in an age of confused standards he turned men's attention to the ideals of Greek classical art. Unlike Horace and other Roman critics who were more concerned with the technical and formal tendencies of classical literature, Longinus alone succeeded in recapturing its very spirit,

and explaining its unchanging principles. Thus he may be termed as the best exponent of the genuine classical spirit. He was also the first romantic critic, because he was the first to emphasise that great piece of literature has in it that sublimity and loftiness which transport, move, carry away, and lift the reader out of himself. But his romantic enthusiasm did not allow licence and unrestrained liberty. Having a classical training he maintained the balance between genius and unimpassioned hard work, and laid stress on the need for fitness, selection and a fine adjustment of means to ends. He may therefore be considered as the last of classical critics who had the touch of romanticism in him. Thus he anticipates much that is modern in critical work. His concern with the essence rather than with the form of literature, his understanding of the part played by imagination and the feelings in a creative work, his effort at literary interpretation and appreciation, and his catholic outlook, are no doubt 'modern' tendencies in criticism, which re-appeared after a lapse of centuries of dry and formal criticism.

Longinus combined within him the faculties which were characteristic of the greatest of his predecessors—Plato and Aristotle. Like Aristotle's, his approach to literature was analytical based on existing Greek literature, and he used the inductive, psychological and historical methods. But he also had the spiritual fervour and idealism of Plato for whom he had the warmest admiration. It is this wonderful combination of opposite qualities,—analytical rationalism and impassioned enthusiasm—which has given him a unique position in the history of literary criticism. By revealing some of the fundamental aesthetic truths about literature, he has exercised a lasting and stimulating influence in the field of literary taste. In his treatise *On the Sublime* there is no dead matter; on the other hand, there is much in it that is vital, expressed in a memorable fashion. He is also one of those critics whose style is worthy of their thought. Like Plato's it is full of rich metaphors, compounds and poetical expression. There is no doubt that Longinus is one of the world's greatest literary critics.

An Estimate of Longinus as a Critic

D.A. Russell says : "European literary criticism owes most, among Greek writers, to Aristotle. Its next biggest creditor is known as Longinus." Saintsbury calls Longinus "the greatest of the late Greek critics." Lascelles Abercrombie calls him 'the first comparative critic of literature.' To David Daiches the importance of Longinus lies in the fact that he asked quite different question about literature from those asked by Plato or Aristotle. Wimsatt and Brooks remark : "As Horace had subdued the theory of poetic words to a decorum of urbanity, conversation, idiom and satire, Longinus heightened it to a decorum of transport."

Longinus deserves these laudatory remarks, in spite of the fact that on no single kind of literature is he as searching as Aristotle on tragedy. Though R.A. Scott James designated him as "the first romantic critic", he was not generally liked by the Romantics. Coleridge spoke of him as 'no profound critic' and perhaps he buried him in that remark. It was Matthew Arnold, the advocate of touch-stone method, who rediscovered the virtues of Longinus' treatise 'On the Sublime'. But Arnold nowhere mentions him. Why did the nineteenth century critics neglet him ? Sir Arthur Quiller—Couch has assigned two reasons. The first is that tone of acceptance of authority was uncongenial to an age which glorified in revolutionary liberty ; and secondly, that Longinus is not the sort of writer who provokes discussion. One feels that what is said is well said and that is the end of matter.

Longinus was, however, widely read in the eighteenth century. After Boileau's translation of 'On the Sublime'

in 1674, his treatise almost became the bible of the neo-classicists. His precepts were liked by all the classical poets. His association with the rules, his advocacy of imitation of the great classics, and his warning against the use of vulgar words, won him great applause and esteem in the eighteenth century. Dryden was familiar with his treatise. John Dennis frequently refers to it in his critical works. Addison popularised it in some of his papers on 'Paradise Lost'. Thus, Longinus played a decisive role in shaping the literary and critical sensibilities of the eighteenth century writers. Prof. Atkins is, therefore, right in asserting that it is "as an exponent of the genuine classical spirit that he is perhaps best described, and not, as he has been called, the first romantic critic".

The classical qualities of Longinus as a critic are quite obvious. He shows a great reverence for the ancient Greek models, for tradition, and advocates their imitation. He does not believe that genius is a law unto himself. He wants to put some curb or restraint on wayward genius. He stands for fitness, correctness, selection and balance. He is blind to the 'romance' in Homer's Odyssey. He believes in rules and regulations. He stands for the use of a refined and cultivated poetic style. All these affinities show that he is one of the belated classical critics of ancient times. But he is something more than this. He is not only the last of the classical critics, but also the first critic who anticipates much that is in modern outlook.

Allen Tate says : "He is the first though necessarily incomplete, literary critic". He was something of a pioneer in analytical and comparative criticism. He shows imaginative sympathy with a work of art. He approaches them in the spirit of a disinterested critic, unhampered by rules and free from bias. His criterion of judgment in literature is based on sound footing. He acknowledges at the very outset of his treatise that the judgment of style is the last and crowning fruit of a long experience and that great literature is that which pleases all and always. The power of literature lies not in persuasion, nor in

pleasure, but in transport, in uplifting, in stimulating. Such views of literature were certainly new in Longinus age. He was opening the eyes of his contemporaries to new aspects of literature. He was trying to impose questions about literature in a new manner. Though he insisted on the importance of the reader's response to literature, he was not a mere impressionist, who judged literature in purely autobiographical terms. David Daiches says : "Longinus does not merely tell his own feelings on reading ; he discusses the proper equipment of the writer and necessary qualities in the work for producing on reader the effect of ecstasy or transport. Though introspection is involved in discovering the effect and value of literature, Longinus is far from reducing criticism to impressionist confession. He has objective standard of judging literature. The emotional response of a reader to to work of art is not the sole criterion of its literary excellence ; it must have a lasting appeal for all the generations. It must have stood the test of time.

It is, therefore, clear that in Longinus we have a great original critic. He strikes a golden mean between the critical methods of Plato and Aristotle. Like Plato, he is impassioned and imaginative, but like Aristotle he believes in analytical, inductive, and historical methods of criticism. And yet his approach is radically different from either Plato's or Aristotle's. These are things in his pages that can never grow old ; while its freshness and light will continue to charm all ages. Atkins has aptly remarked : "The work of Longinus is in a sense contemporaneous with that of Plato and Aristotle and Coleridge."

Longinus—as the first Romantic Critic.

Longinus is regarded as the first romantic critic. According to him, the value of a work of literature is to be assessed by introspection on the part of the reader ; if he is carried away, transported, moved to ecstasy by the grandeur and passion of the work, then the work is actually good. Pope, the famous poet and critic of the eighteenth century, says :

> "Thee, bold Longinus ! all the Nine inspire,
> And bless their critic with a poet's fire :
> An ardent judge, who, zealous in his trust
> With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just,
> Whose own example strengthens all his laws ;
> And is himself that great Sublime he draws."
>
> (*Essay on Critlcism*).

Sublime literature, Longinus says, can transport and lift us out of ourselves by a power which confounds the judgment, eclipses mere reason, and illuminates a subject with the vividness of lightning. Longinus prefers to speak of the emotions which great literature stirs, the passions it calls forth, the transport or ecstasy to which it leads. Sublimity in literature has as its end, not persuasion, but ecstasy—transport—"lifting out of oneself." He is far more interested in that side of art which springs from the 'Nature' of the artist, the internal element which supplies what artifice can only regulate.

The greatness of utterance, Longinus points out, is rooted in personality. It is a fruit of the spirit, of the whole nature of man ; and as such, it requires above all the play of the imagination as well as the exercise of genuine emotion, both of which are to be communicated to the hearer (or reader). What comes from the heart goes to the

heart; this in reality is the basis on which Longinus builds up his arguments. Hence, as his first criterion of excellence in literature, he demands the presence of an imaginative and emotional appeal; the power, that is, of uplifting the soul of the reader and of filling him with joy and pride, by arousing in him noble thoughts and suggesting more than the words actually convey. Nothing is more remarkable than the way in which he makes use of aesthetic tests in forming his judgments; as when, for instance, he brings to light the imaginative qualities of Homer, Sappho, and others. That he conceived literature to be not mere craft but a thing of spirit is shown by the character of his treatment. Thus to him a poet was great, not by reasons of his technique, but in virtue of his imagination, his gift of feeling, and his power of conveying those, qualities to others. Of the earlier didactic conceptions he gives not a hint; and what is perhaps more surprising, he disregards entirely the stock theories of 'pleasure' and 'persuasion'. What he sees in literature is a great aesthetic force, appealing irresistably to the whole nature of man, uplifting, bracing, stimulating, while nourshing something that lies deep in his nature. And in this larger conception of the aesthetic function he approaches more nearly to modern ideas than did any of his predecessors. He is classical in his balance he maintains between genius and unimpassioned hard work, in his sense of the need for fitness, selection and a fine adjustment of means to ends. But while this is true, it is also true that he anticipates much that is modern in critical work. And this is shown by his concern with the essence rather than with the form of literature, his understanding of the part played by the imagination and feelings in creative work. Conspicuous for his suggestiveness and for the number of aesthetic truths he revealed or made familiar, he stands as a reminder of some of the essentials of literature, and as a lasting and stimulating force in the field of literary taste.

Though Longinus was the first to expound the doctrines upon which romanticism rests, he turned and tempered them with what is sanest in classicism. While he pointed

the way to the storm and fury of a romantic movement, he himself set up the danger-post and reimposed the classic discipline. Though he was the first great critic to proclaim the efficacy of inspiration, he did not think that beauty comes like a wind from heaven to fill the sails of poet's ship and drive it without effort across the sea. Just as he laid down for the critic that "the judgment of literature is the long-delayed award of much endeavour" so also he insisted that poet must study to master the technique of his art. 'Nature', it is true, is the first thing. Nature must 'supply.' But Nature cannot dispense with Art, whose function it is to 'regulate.' For him, classicism was touched with romance, but not darkened. His romanticism was sane and bright by dint of contact with the classic order.

Longinus : His Principal Canons of Criticism

Longinus was a man of rare literary insight and sensibilities. He was much ahead of his own times. He was a rhetorician as well as a critic ; and as a critic he saw more deeply into the nature of art than did most of his contemporaries. He did not tread on the beaten track. He stood aloof from what had grown mechanical and conventional. His approach to literature and to the problems connected with it was radically different from that of his predecessors or his contemporaries. He had no moral predilictions. He approached literature as a great aesthetic force and consequently his criticism is also of the pure aesthetic kind, and of the best of that kind.

Though primarily meant to be a treatise on style *On the Sublime* is considerably wider in its scope as it also discusses some of the fundamental problem of literary criticism. Longinus's remarks on the standards for forming judgment in literature are of permanent value. He describes the task of pronouncing judgment on literature as an arduous one. It is indeed "the final fruit of ripe experience."

The value of a work of art can be assessed, according to Longinus, by its power to 'move', to uplift the soul of the reader and take it to the ecstatic heights of aesthetic experience. Its criterion of excellence is "not persuasion but transport." "Our soul is uplifted by the true sublime, it takes a proud flight, and is filled with joy and vaunting, as though it had itself produced what it has heard."

(*On the Sublime*)

Literature must have an imaginative and emotional appeal. It should affect not only the emotions or the intellect, but the whole self of man. It should arouse in

him noble thoughts and should elevate him to rapturous heights. The greatest quality in a work of literature which can irresistably "create in the reader a sense of being carried to new heights of passionate experience" is sublimity. To attain sublimity is the ultimate end of literature and its function is to create the effect of ecstasy or transport.

Besides having this quality of producing ecstatic effects on the minds of the readers, great literature should also have permanence of appeal. "In general", Longinus says, "you should regard that greatness in art to be noble and genuine which appeals to all men in all ages." By all men, he means "men of sense, well acquainted with literature. He prescribes test of time for judging the literary excellence of a work of literature. He argues :

> "When men of different pursuits, lives, ambitions, ages, languages, hold identical view on one and the same subject, then that verdict which results, so to speak, from a concert of discordant elements makes our faith in the object of admiration strong and unassailable."

Who would like to differ from Longinus' reasoning ? He has placed before the practical test of the greatness of literature. A great work of literature would be read and re-read down the ages with undiminished delight. Atkins says : "The fact is that Longinus has here called attention to one of the basic truth of literature and literaray criticism, namely the inexhaustible vitality of all great art, and its power of communicating life down through the ages. In all great literature there are latent correspondences with human nature which time alone can reveal ; and it is by virtue of this fact that the test of time, this permanence of appeal, is, on the whole, the soundest criterion of what constitutes greatness in literature."

Another critical principle that Longinus has enunciated is that the works of great masters should be made touchstones to judge the excellence of a literary work. By recommending the great masters as "touchstones" Longinus

has laid down the stadanrds of judging literature. "The consciousness," says D. A. Russell, "of a responsibility to the past and to the future is the best stimulus to the work of a high quality."

These critical canons of Longinus broke new ground in his own age and are of considerable interest to modern readers also. Longinus prefers the faulty but impressive work of a genius to the flawless creation of a mediocre. Though the last of the classical critics, he does not attach much importance to the ideal of correctness. He says: "While immunity from errors relieves from censure, it is grandeur that excites admiration." (*On the Sublime*) Correctness in a writer may be described as a human virtue, but sublimity raises him near the majesty of God.

These are the standards of literary excellence which Longinus has prescribed for writers as well as critics. In this respect, Longinus may be truly regarded as a pioneer in the field of judicial, comparative and historical criticism. His originality lies in the fact that he gave us new outlook on literary criticism in an age which was dominated by rhetorical discussions. He infused a new life into rhetorical problems and raised them to the sublime heights of genuine literature. He saw literature as a great aesthetic force and subordinated all ethical considerations to aesthetic experience. In this conception of literature he approached more nearly to modern ideas than did any of his predecessors.

Introduction to "On The Sublime."

Longinus's treatise *'On the Sublime'* occupies a unique and important position in the history of literary criticism. Though simpler in thought and much more colourful in style than the "*Poetics*", the treatise *On the Sublime* has wielded an immense influence on the development of critical thought from Boileau to the early nineteenth century.

Who is the real author of the treatise commonly called *On the Sublime*, is still a matter of controversy. Francis Robortells who first presented the work to modern readers in 1554, attributed it to Dionysius Longinus, a rhetorician of the first century A.D. Then arose the tradition that the work was a production of Cassius Longinus, a philosopher-rhetorician of the third century A.D., who also happened to be counsellor of the rebellious Queen, Zenobia, of Palmyra. This view is supported by some recent critics also. R.A. Scott James, for example, thinks that "the essential character of the essay *On the Sublime*, its style, its argument, its implied philosophy, serve to identify its author with the Longinus who in late life became Zenobia's Greek secretary." Whether the work belongs to the first century or to the third century, we leave this perplexing question to the scholars of antiquarian zeal. For our purpose, it is sufficient to note that the work has long been associated with the name of one 'Longinus' and has come down to us simply as "*Longinus On the Sublime.*" So long as the real author remains shrouded in mystery, the name of *'Longinus'* stands as good as any other name to claim the authorship of his ancient treatise. The difficulties of the evidence concerning its date and authorship will ever remain unsolved as no reference to the

treatise is found in ancient records, either classical or medieval.

Regarding the immediate occasion of the work, we gather from its first chapter that it was written to controvert a book *On the Sublime* written by the rhetorician Caecilius of the first century A.D. Longinus thought that Caecilius has failed to do full justice to his subject and that his work was inadequate. He, therefore, embarked on the task of writing an elaborate treatise on the '*Sublime*'. Unfortunately, one third of the original text is lost and what has come down to us is an imperfect copy of the original, mutilated and lacking coherence at several places. The broad outline of the work is, however, clear and we do not find any difficulty in understanding the main ideas of the author. It is addressed to one Terentianus, possibly a pupil or friend of Longinus, whose identity is also uncertain.

"The Nature of the Sublime."

"Great utterance," says Longinus," is the echo of greatness of the soul." It is impossible that those whose minds are trivial and servile should flash out anything wonderful and worthy of immortality. Great literature is thus the creation of instinctive genius. Thought that are lofty and awe-inspiring find their natural expression in exalted phrase. Such loftiness of thought is normally a gift of nature rather than an açquired quality. But art can help in putting a curb on the wild and licentious tendencies of nature. "Fine writing," says Longinus, "needs the spur as well as the curb." Both art and nature are, therefore, necessary for the creation of sublimity in literature.

But, what does actually the Sublime consist in? Longinus tries to answer the question at the very outset of his treatise :

> "The Sublime consists in a certain loftiness and consummateness of language, and it is by this that the greatest poets and prose-writers have won pre-eminence and lasting fame."

And he goes on :

> "A work of genius does not aim at persuasion, but ecstasy——or lifting the reader out of himself. The wonder of it, wherever and whenever it appears, startle us ; it prevails where the persuasive or agreeable may fail ; for persuasion depends mainly on ourselves, but there is no fighting against the sovereignty of genius. It imposes its irresistible will upon us all. The Sublime at the critical moment shoots forth and tears the whole

thing to pieces like a thunderbolt, and in a flash reveals all the author's power."

"Here then," says R.A. Scott James, "we have the first perfectly definite statement of a doctrine which Joubert could not make more precise when he said : "Nothing is poetry unless it transports ;" which Sir Thomas Browne was to translate into the language of sentiment when he exclaimed, "I love to lose myself in a mystery, to pursue my reason to an O Altitudo !" and which De Quincey was to nail down in his distinction between the literature of knowledge and the literature of power—"The function of the first is to teach ; the function of the second is to move." The sublime effect of literature, for Longinus, is attained, not by argument, but by revelation, or illumination. Its appeal is not through the reason, but what we should call imagination. Its effect on the mind is immediate, like a flash of lightning on the eye.

Is transport a mere subjective quality or can it be sufficiently objective to be insolated for critical discussion ? Longinus does not explicitly answer this question. But he seems to believe that this quality is both subjective and objective. It is a double sense : it springs from a lofty soul and at the same time it places much tress on the power of introspection in a reader. The value of a work is to be ultimately assessed by its power to carry away a reader. There is, however, another implication. There are some elements of style and structure which definitely contribute to the grandeur and elevation of a work. Since the quality of transport is the result of the grandeur and passion of the work, partly contributed by art, the quality may be objective also. It is here that Longinus comes close to modern critics. He seems to suggest that there can be "a criticism of convincing objectivity which approaches the literary work through the analysis of style and which arrives at its larger aspects through that aperture."

On Sublimity (Longinus)

Sublimity is a kind of eminence or excellence in expression. It is the source of distinction of the greatest poets and prose-writers and the means by which they have given eternal life to their glory and fame. Sublimity in literature produces ecstasy rather than persuasion in the reader ; and the combination of wonder and astonishment always prove superior to mere persuasion and pleasure. This is because persuasion is, on the whole, something we can control, whereas amazement and wonder exert invincible power and force and get the better of every reader. Experience in invention and ability to order and arrange material cannot be detected in a single passage ; we begin to appreciate them only when we see the whole context. Sublimity, on the other hand, produced at the right moment, lifts everything up like a whirlwind, and exhibits itself through a single phrase like a flash of lightning.

Some people think it a complete mistake to reduce things like this to technical values. Greatness, the argument runs, is a natural product, and does not come by teaching. Moreover, they believe that natural products are very much weakened and impaired by being reduced to the bare bones of a text book.

Longinus refutes this view on the following grounds :

(*a*) Though Nature is, on the whole, a law unto herself in matters of emotions and elevation, she is not a random force, working without methods.

(*b*) Grandeur is particularly dangerous when left on its own, unaccomplished by knowledge, abandoned to mere

impulse and ignorant temerity. It often needs the curb as well as spur. What Demosthenes said of life in general is true also of literature : good fortune is the greatest of blessings, but good counsel comes next, and its lack destroy the other also." In literature nature occupies the place of good fortune and art that of good counsel. Art is to nature what good counsel is to good fortune.

The Sources of Sublimity

According to Longinus, there are five principal sources of sublimity. Of these, the first two depend on Nature, while the rest can be acquired with the help of art.

(*a*) The First Source : Greatness of Thought.

The first natural source of the Sublime is the power of conceiving great ideas. We must develop our mind in the direction of greatness and make them always pregnant with noble and elevated thoughts. Sublimity, say Longinus, is the echo of a great soul. This is why a mere idea, without verbal expression, is sometimes admired for its nobility and greatness. "Great accents we expect to fall from the lips of those whose thoughts are deep and grave." Persons with mean and servile ideas cannot produce anything that is admirable and worthy of immortality. The great writer must have genuine nobility of thought, and soul. Words will be great and striking if ideas are right and weighty. Here Longinus comes near the view that Milton expressed later : "He who would not be frustrated of his hope to write well.......... ought himself to be a true poem."

(*b*) The Second Source : High Feeling.

The second source of sublimity is vehement and impetuous passion. The author must possess impressive thoughts as well as vehement and genuine emotions. It is the vehement passion that moves the listeners and readers. Longinus says : "I should myself have no hesitation in saying that there is nothing so productive of grandeur as noble emotion in the right place. It inspires and possesses our words with a kind of madness and divine spirit." Thus lofty conception and strong passion are inseparable.

Both are essential for producing the sublime effect. The first represents the creative urge and the second represents the expressive urge. The Romantics later on emphasised the importance of these two sources in the form of imagination and inspiration.

(*c*) **The Third Source : Figures**.

The remaining three sources of the Sublime mentioned by Longinus involved art. He tells us that certain kinds of figures of thought and speech, if judiciously employed, contribute to sublimity in no mean degree. The grandeur of a figure, however, depends on "its being employed in the right place and the right manner, on the right occasion, and with the right motive." A figure is at its best when the very fact that it is a figure escapes attention. Figures are natural allies of sublimity and themselves profit wonderfully from the alliance. Thus sublimity and emotions are a defence and a wonderful aid against the suspicion which the use of figures endangers. The artifice of the trick is lost to sight in the surrounding brilliance of beauty and grandeur, and it escapes all suspicion. Below are given some of the figures which Longinus particularly chose for the purpose of stylistic excellence :

1. **The figure of Adjuration or Apostrophe** : This figure is used where emotions are heightened and the natural course of arguments fail to bring about the desired effect. This is based on the changes of syntax. The usual order of composition is transformed into transcendent sublimity and passion.

2. **Questions and Answers** : They are used to make the speeches more effective and impressive. They stimulate a natural outburst of passion.

3. **Asyndeton combined with Anaphora** : This consists in broken sentences. In this figure the conjunction between words and clauses is omitted. While *Anaphora* means the repitition of words. Repitition sometimes add to the weight and dignity of expression.

4. Diatyposis : This is a figure based on vivid description. The union of *asyndeton*, *anaphora* and *diatyposis* can contribute a fund of strength, persuasiveness, and beauty of style.

5. Hyperbata : *Hyperbata* or inversion are departures in the order of expressions or ideas from the natural sequence, and they bear the very stamp of vehement emotion.

6. Polyptota : These are the figures based on the changes of cases, tenses numbers, genders, etc. They are excellent weapons of public oratory. They diversify and enliven exposition. They impart beauty, vigour, and elevation to style.

7. Periphrasis : *Periphrasis* adds greatly to the beauty of expression. But if it is not handled with discrimination, it tends to degenerate into a trivial and burdensome expression. Great restraint is, therefore, needed in the use of this figure.

(*d*) The Fourth Source : Noble Diction.

Thought and expression are, of course, closely related to each other. The choice of correct and magnificent words is a source of immense power to entice and charm the reader. This is something which all orators and other writers do practise. It brings grandeur, beauty, outward charm, weight and force to our words, as though they were the fairest statues. It gives things new life and makes them speak. It is true that beautiful words are the light which illuminates our ideas. But their majesty is not always serviceable. To dress up trivial material in grand and solemn language is like putting a huge tragic mask on a little child. Longinus makes it clear that stately words must be used with great care and caution, otherwise they will make the whole expression artificial and puerile. Ordinary and striking words should be preferred, but they should not be allowed to fall on the verge of vulgarity. Moreover, all impassioned expression involves the use of metaphors ; and the metaphors contribute to the sublime.

(e) The Fifth Source : Harmonious Composition.

The fifth source of the sublime is the harmonious arrangement of words. The beauty of the body depends on the way in which the limbs are joined together. Similarly great ideas which lack connexion shatter the entire sublime effect ; whereas if they co-operate to form a unity and are linked by the bonds of harmony, they attain dignity and grandeur. Aristotle says : "Beauty is a matter of proportion." So the organic structure of a work gives it an additional beauty and charm.

"Features destructive of Sublimity."

The following features impair and mar the dignity of a work :

1. There is nothing which introduces pettiness into sublime passages so much as a broken and excited, rhythm.

2. Another means of lowering sublimity is excessive conciseness of expression ; a grand phrase is maimed when it is gathered into too short a compass.

3. Pettiness of words again, is strangely potent in making fine passages crude and unfair. It is wrong to stoop in a sublime passage to mean and discredited terms unless we are compelled by some strong necessity.

4. Turgidity is a particularly hard fault to avoid, for it is one to which all who aim at the greatness naturally incline, because they endeavour to escape the charge of weakness and aridity. They act on the principle that 'To slip from a great prize is yet a noble fault.' As in bodies, so in writings, all swellings which are hollow and unreal are bad and destroy the grandeur of a work.

5. While turgidity is an endeavour to get above the sublime, puerility is the mere opposite of greatness. It is a thoroughly low, mean and ignoble vice. 'Puerility is a pedantic thought, so overworked that it ends in frigidity. Writers slip into it through aiming at originality, artifice, and (above all) charm.

"The Pathways to Achieve Sublimity."

Apart from the sources of sublimity mentioned above, Longinus suggests some other methods to achieve sublimity. One pathway to achieve the sublime is the imitation and emulation of great poets and writers of the past.

Another road to sublimity is the proper selection and organisation of material. The most important elements and striking circumstances should be combined into an organic whole. All that is irrelevant, frivolous and mean should be discarded.

Amplification also contributes to sublimity. It gives a sense of vastness and extension to a subject. Sublimity is often comprised in a single thought, while amplification is universally associated with a certain magnitude and abundance. It helps the writer when he has to develop his thought and give it an elaborate treatment.

Such are the sources of sublimity which belong to the realm of art. Though Longinus was the first great critic, says R.A. Scott James, to proclaim the efficacy of inspiration, he did not think that beauty comes like a wind from heaven to fill the sails of the poet's ship and drive it without effort across the sea. Just as he laid it down for the critic that the judgment of literature is the long-delayed reward of much endeavour ; so he also insisted that the poet must study to master the technique of his art. Nature, it is true, is the first thing. Nature must supply. But Nature cannot dispense with art whose function it is to regulate. Thus when Longinus discusses the sources of sublimity, he does not hesitate to mention among them those that belong to the art, or artifice, of literature. He realizes that both nature and art are necessary for creating sublimity in literature. Nature occupies the first place, and art, the second. Nature provides the spur and art puts the curb on wayward fancy. Hence the two cannot be divorced. The greatness of art lies in their happy union.

An Analysis of "On the Sublime"

Chapter I, Preliminaries Definition of Sublimity

Sublimity is a certain distinction and excellence in expression. It is only through sublimity that the greatest poets and prose writers have derived their eminence and gained an immortality of renown. Sublimity in literature does not persuade, it carries us away almost irresistibly. Sometimes it might express itself through a single phrase like a flash of lightning.

Chapter II. Is There an Art of the Sublime ?

Some people deny this outright because they think that sublimity is a gift of nature and it has nothing to do with art. They say : "a lofty tone is innate, and does not come by teaching, nature is the only art that can compass it." These views may be countered by two arguments. In the first place, nature needs the help of some method to control its wild impulses. Secondly, the very fact that there are some elements of expression which are in the hands of nature alone, can be learnt from no other source than art. Art is to nature what good counsel is to good fortune. The expression of the sublime often needs the spur, but the it also needs the curb which is put by art alone.

Chapter III to VII. Some Faults Which Spoil the Sublime Effect.

There are some defects of style which tend to spoil the sublime effect. These faults are tugidity, puerility, parenthyrsus and frigidity. All these faults emerge from the craze for novelty of thought. It is necessary to find out means by which these faults may be avoided. For this, it is essential to have a clear knowledge and appreciation of the true sublime. The true sublime uplifts our soul. It gives us joy and exalts our spirits. The more we read it the more we enjoy it. Every time it evokes new ideas and

feelings. It never grows stale. In short, the true sublime "pleases always."

Chapter VIII. Five Principal Sources of the Sublime.

There are five principal sources of the sublime :—

(*i*) The power of conceiving great thought.

(*ii*) Strong and inspired passion.

(*iii*) Noble diction, including a proper choice of words and handling of metaphor and elaborate language.

(*iv*) Dignified and elevated composition.

The first two of these sources are inborn gifts of a genius, the rest can be acquired by art.

Chapter IX. The Sublime in Thought Produced by Greatness of Soul.

Great thoughts spring from great souls. The truly eloquent must be free from low and ignoble thoughts. Men with mean and servile ideas cannot produce immortal literature. It is only great minds that produce great literature.

Chapter X. Another Road to Sublimity : Proper Selection and Organisation of Material.

Another thing that contributes to sublimity of style is the wise and systematic selection of the most important elements (events, emotions or passions) and their combination into a single whole.

Chapter XI. Amplification.

Excellence may be achieved through amplification also. *i.e.* through the accumulation of all the relevant details of a subject. This imparts power and magnitude to the style.

Chapter XII. Sublimity vs Amplification.

The point of distinction between sublimity and amplification is that sublimity consists in elevation, while amplification embraces a multitude of details. Sublimity is often comprised in a single thought, while amplification needs to many ideas and words. Sublimity, in this way, is a qualitative concept ; amplification becomes quantitative.

Chapter XIII, XIV. Imitation as a means to Sublimity

There is another way which leads to the sublime. It is the imitation and emulation of previous great poets and writers. The great masters are the standards of excellence. Hence they should be imitated. The writer should face three questions : (*i*) How would Homer or Plato have expressed a particular idea, (*ii*) If Homer or Plato were to listen to what he composed, what would be their reaction, (*iii*) How would all future ages endure those expressions. These three tests will serve as a touchstone for sublimity and will stimulate the writer to produce a work of high quality.

Chapter XV. Imagery

The power of vivid description also helps in the creation of the sublime. The writer should first vividly see what he describes. The aim of poetical images is to captivate the readers ; the aim of rhetorical images is to present a vivid description. Both, however, seek to stir the passions and the emotions.

Chapter XVI & XVII. The Proper Handling of Figures

Figures, if properly handled, contribute to sublimity. But the figures should be employed in the right place, on the right occasion, in the right manner, with a right motive.

Figures should be used in a natural manner. The artificiality of figures rouses suspicion and anger. Art lies

in concealing art. 'Wherefore a figures is at its best when the very fact that it is a figure escapes attention.'

Chapters XVIII & IX The Use of Questions as a Rhetorical Device

The use of questions and answers often makes the speeches more effective and impressive. They make the language not only more elevated but also more convincing. But these questions should spring from a natural outburst of passion and should be inspired by the occasion.

If a question is inspired by a strong passion, the words will pour out spontaneously and will add to the impetuousity of effect.

Chapters XX & XXI. The Union of Figures.

The union of certain figures for a common object contributes much strength, beauty and persuasiveness to the speech. In order to produce a powerful effect figures as *Asyndeton* (broken sentences), *Anaphora* (repetition of words), and *Diatyposis* (vivid description) may be combined together. This union will impart vigour, cogency and beauty to style. But if the connecting links are provided the passage will lose its rapidity and power.

Chapter XXII. The Use of Hyperbata or Inversions

Hyperbata is a figure which consists in the inversion of the natural order of words or thoughts. It bears the very stamp of vehement emotion. When a person speaks under the stress of a strong passion the logical order tends to be broken and he jumps from one thought to another. This figure, therefore, gives a touch of reality to speech and produces the effect of nature. 'Art is perfect when it seems to be nature, and nature hits the mark when she contains art hidden within her.'

Chapters XXIII to XXVII. The Use of Polyptota : Figures Involving Changes of Case, Tense, Person, Number.

Polyptota is a figure which is found in the interchange of one case for another, of one number for another, of the tense and of the person. It is an excellent weapon of public oratory and contributes to every form of sublimity : The use of these figures diversifies and enlivens exposition. These figures may involve the following changes

(*a*) Plural for singular.

(*b*) Singular where plural is expected.

(*c*) Present for the past.

(*d*) Interchange of persons.

(*e*) Change of case.

Chapters XXVIII, XXIX. The Use of Periphrasis.

The use of Periphrasis also contributes to the sublime and adds greatly to its beauty. But it is to be handled with great discrimination, otherwise it will fall flat.

Chapters XXX, XXXI. The Fourth Source of the Sublime : Noble Diction.

The choice of proper and striking words is essential for producing the sublime effect, because it is through words that a man expresses himself. Beautiful words are the very soul of lofty thought. But inappropriate magnificence of diction should be avoided. For example, trifling subjects should not be treated in a grand manner.

Chapters XXXII. The Use of Metaphors.

Figurative language possesses great natural power, and so the use of metaphors contributes to the sublime. Metaphors should, however, be used in impassioned and

descriptive passages. 'The proper time for using metaphors is when the passions roll like a torrent and sweep a multitude of them down their resistless flood.'

Chapters XXXIII—XXXVI Digression

A genius with some faults is better than a flawless, mediocre.

Chapter XXXVII—The Use of Similes.

Chapter XXXVIII—The Use of Hyperboles.

Hyperboles may be employed in describing things great as well as small, since exaggeration is the common element in both cases. Those hyperboles are best in which the very fact that they are hyperboles escapes attention.

Chapter XXXIX-XLII—The Fifth Source of the Sublime ; Harmonious Composition.

The harmonious arrangement of words is the fifth source of the sublime. It is great source of persuasion and pleasure. It also contributes to lofty utterance and passion. It is the sense of harmony that gives an organic structure to a work of art. A sentence or a period too has an organic structure. That depends on the power of composition. Broken and agitated movement of language spoils the sublime, effect. Excessive conciseness of expression also tends to lower the sublime, 'since grandeur is marred when the thought is brought into too narrow a compass.'

Chapter XLIII—Low and Undignified Language.

Low and undignified vocabulary also tends to disfigure sublimity. Ill-sounding words and vulgar idioms should be avoided.

Chapter XLIV—Conclusion ; Causes of the Decline of Great Literature.

Some critics felt that the decline of the truly great literature in their times was due to the lack of incentive

which democracy provided to the men of genius in earlier times. Longinus differs from these critics He thinks that it is characteristic of human nature to find fault in the age in which one lives. Nevertheless, the cause of the decline of great literature, according to him, was the moral decline of the people. People had started attaching more importance to the materialistic values of life and they did not try to exert themselves except for the sake of praise, money or pleasure. As he had already stated: great literature springs from great and lofty souls and not from those with whom the world is too much.

CONCERNING SUBLIMITY

I

THE treatise written by Caecilius 'concerning Sublimity' appeared to us, as you will remember, dear Postumius Terentianus, when we looked into it together, to fall below the level of the general subject, failing especially in grasp of vital points ; and to give his readers but little of that assistance which should be the first aim of every writer. In any technical treatise two points are essential ; the first, that the writer should show what the thing proposed for inquiry is ; the second, but in effect the more important, that he should tell us by what specific methods that thing may be made our own. Now Caecilius endeavours to show us by a vast number of instances what the sublime is, as though we did not know ; the process by which we may raise our natural powers to a required advance in scale he unaccountably passed over as unnecessary. So far as he is concerned, perhaps we ought to praise the man for his ingenuity and pains, not to blame him for the omissions. Since, however, you lay your commands upon me, that I should take up the subject in my turn, and without fail put something on paper about Sublimity as a favour to yourself, give me your company ; let us see whether there is anything in the views which I have formed really serviceable to men in public life. You, comrade, will help me by passing judgement, with perfect frankness, upon all particulars ; you can and you ought. It was well answered by one who wished to show wherein we resemble gods : 'in doing good,' said he, 'and in speaking truth.'

Writing to you, my dear friend, with your perfect knowledge of all liberal study, I am almost relieved at the outset from the necessity of showing at any length that Sublimity is always an eminence and excellence in language ;

and that from this, and this alone, the greatest poets and writers of prose have attained the first place and have clothed their fame with immortality. For it is not to persuasion but to ecstasy that passages of extraordinary genius carry the hearer: now the marvellous, with its power to amaze, is always and necessarily stronger than that which seeks to persuade and to please: to be persuaded rests usually with ourselves, genius brings force sovereign and irresistible to bear upon every hearer, and takes its stand high above him. Again, skill in invention and power of orderly arrangement are not seen from one passage nor from two, but emerge with effort out of the whole context; Sublimity, we know, brought out at the happy moment, parts all the matter this way and that, and like a lightning flash, reveals, at a stroke and in its entirety, the power of the orator. These and suchlike considerations I think, my dear Terentianus, that your own experience might supply.

II

WE, however, must at once raise this further question; is there any art of sublimity or of its opposite? For some go so far as to think all who would bring such terms under technical rules to be entirely mistaken. 'Genius,' says one, 'is inbred, not taught; there is one art for the things of genius, to be born with them.' All natural effects are spoilt, they think, by technical rules, and become miserable skeletons. I assert that the reverse will prove true on examination, if we consider that Nature, a law to herself as she mostly is in all that is passionate and lofty, yet is no creature of random impulse delighting in mere absence of method; that she is indeed herself the first and originating principle which underlies all things, yet rules of degree, of fitting occasion, of unerring practice, and of application can be determined by method and are its contribution; in a sense all greatness is exposed to a danger of its own, if left to itself without science to control, 'unsteadied, unballasted,' abandoned to mere velocity and uninstructed venture; greatness needs the spur often, it also needs the bit. What Demosthenes shows to be true of the common

life of men—that of all good things the greatest is good fortune, but a second, not inferior to the first, is good counsel, and that where the latter is wanting the former is at once cancelled—we may properly apply to literature; here Nature fills the place of good fortune, Art of good counsel. Also, and this is most important, it is only from Art that we can learn the very fact that certain effects in literature rest on Nature and on her alone. If, as I said, the critic who finds fault with earnest students, would take all these things into his account, he would in my opinion no longer deem inquiry upon the subjects before us to be unnecessary or unfruitful.

[*Here the equivalent of about six pages of this translation has been lost.*]

III

Stay they the furance ! quench the far-flung blaze !
For if I spy one crouching habitant,
I'll twist a lock, one lock of storm-borne flame,
And fire the roof, and char the halls to ash :
Not yet, not now my noble strain is raised

ALL this is tragic no longer, but burlesque of tragic; 'locks,' 'to vomit up to heaven,' 'Boreas turned flute player,' and the rest. It is turbid in expression, and confused in imagery, not forcible; and if you examine each detail in clear light, you see a gradual sinking from the terrible to the contemptible. Now when in tragedy, which by its nature is pompous and admits bombast, tasteless rant is found to be unpardonable, I should be slow to allow that it could be in place in true history. Thus we laugh at Gorgias of Leontini for writing 'Xerxes the Zeus of the Persians' and 'vultures, those living tombs,' and at some passages in Callisthenes as being stilted, not sublime, and even more at some in Cleitarchus; he is a mere fantastic, he 'puffs,' to apply the words of Sophocles, 'on puny pipes, *but* with no mellowing gag.' So with Amphicrates, Hegesias, and Matris; they often appear to themselves to be

possessed, really they are no inspired revellers but children at play. We may take it that turgidity is of all faults perhaps the most difficult to avoid. It is a fact of Nature that all men who aim at grandeur, in avoiding the reproach of being weak and dry, are, we know not how, borne off into turgidity, caught by the adage :—'To lapse from greatness were a generous fault.' As in bodies, so in writings, all swellings which are hollow and unreal are bad, and very possibly work round to the opposite condition, for 'nothing,' they say, 'so dry as a man with dropsy.'

While tumidity thus tends to overshoot the sublime, puerility is the direct opposite of all that is great ; it is in every sense low and small spirited, and essentially a most ignoble fault. What then is puerility ? Clearly it is a pedantic conceit, which overdoes itself and becomes frigid at the last. Authors glide into this when they make for what is unusual, artificial, above all, agreeable, and so run on the reefs of nonsense and affectation. By the side of these is a third kind of vice, found in passages of strong feeling, and called by Theodorus 'Parenthyrsus.' This is passion out of place and unmeaning, where there is no call for passion, or unrestrained where restraint is needed. Men are carried aside, as if under strong drink, into expressions of feeling which have nothing to do with the subject, but are personal to themselves and academic : then they play clumsy antics before an audience which has never been moved ; it cannot be otherwise, when the speakers are in an ecstasy, and the hearers are not. But we reserve room to speak of the passions elsewhere.

IV

OF the second fault which we mentioned, frigidity, Timaeus is full ; an able author in other respects, and not always wanting in greatness of style ; learned, acute, but extremely critical of the faults of others, while insensible to his own ; often sinking into mere childishness from an incessant desire to start new notions. I will set down one or two instances only from this author, since Caecilius has

has been before me with most of them. Praising Alexander the Great, he writes: 'who annexed all Asia in fewer years than Isocrates took to write his *Panegyricus* in support of war against the Persians.' Truly a wonderful comparison between the Macedonian and the Sophist: yes, Timaeus, clearly the Lacedaemonians were far out-matched by Isocrates in valour, for they took Messene in thirty years, he composed his *Panegyricus* in ten! Then how he turns upon the Athenians captured in Sicily: 'Because they committed impiety against Hermes, and defaced his images, they suffered punishment for it, largely on account of one man, a descendant, on the father's side, of the injured god, Hermocrates, son of Hermon.' This makes me wonder, dear Terentianus, that he does not also write of the tyrant Dionysius: 'He had shown impiety towards Zeus and Heracles; therefore he was deprived of his kingdom by Dion and Heraclides.' What need to speak of Timaeus, when those heroes Xenophon and Plato, although they were of Socrates' own school, sometimes forgot themselves in such paltry attempts to please. Thus Xenophone writes in the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*: 'I mean to say that you can no more hear their voices than if they were made of stone, no more draw their eyes aside than if they were made of brass; you might think them more modest than the maiden-pupils in their eyes.' It was worthy of Amphicrates, not of Xenophon, to call the pupils in our eyes 'modest maidens': but what a notion, to believe that the eyes of a whole row were modest, whereas they say that immodesty in particular persons is expressed by nothing so much as by the eyes. Addressing a forward person, 'Wine laden, dog-eyed!' says Homer. Timaeus, however, as if clutching at stolen goods, has not left to Xenophon even this point of frigidity. He says, speaking of Agathocles, that he even carried off his cousin, who had been given in marriage to another man, from the solemnity of Unveiling; 'Now who would have done this, who had maidens, not harlots, in his eyes?' Nay, Plato, the divine, as at other times he is, wishing to mention tablets, says: 'they will write and store in the temples memorials of cypress wood,' and again 'concerning walls, O Megillus, I would take the

Spartan view, to allow our walls to sleep on the ground where they lie, and not be raised again.' And Herodotus is hardly clear of this fault, when he calls beautiful women 'pains to the eyes'; though he has some excuse, for the speakers in Herodotus are barbarians and in drink: still, not even through the mouths of such characters is it well, out of sheer pettiness, to cut a clumsy figure before all time.

V

ALL these undignified faults spring up in literature from a single cause, the craving for intellectual novelties, on which, above all else, our own generation goes wild. It would almost be true to say that the sources of all the good in us are also the sources of all the bad. Thus beauties of expression, and all which is sublime, I will add, all which is agreeable, contribute to success in our writing; and yet every one of these becomes a principle and a foundation, as of success, so of its opposite. Much the same is to be said of changes of construction, hyperboles, plurals for singulars; we will show in the sequel the danger which seems to attend each. Therefore it is necessary at once to raise the question directly, and to show how it is possible for us to escape the vices thus intimately mingled with the sublime.

VI

IT is possible, my friend, to do this, if we could first of all arrive at a clear and discriminating knowledge of what true sublimity is. Yet this is hard to grasp: judgement of style is the last and ripest fruit of much experience. Still, if I am to speak in the language of precept, it is perhaps not impossible, from some such remarks as follow, to attain to a right decision upon the matter.

VII

WE must, dear friend, know this truth. As in our ordinary life nothing is great which it is a mark of greatness

to despise; as fortunes, offices, honours, kingdoms, and such like, things which are praised so pompously from without, could never appear, at least to a sensible man, to be surpassingly good, since actual contempt for them is a good of no mean kind (certainly men admire, more than those who have them, those who might have them, but in greatness of soul let them pass); even so it is with all that is elevated in poetry and prose writings; we have to ask whether it may be that they have that image of greatness to which so much careless praise is attached, but on a close scrutiny would be found vain and hollow, things which it is nobler to despise than to admire. For it is a fact of Nature that the soul is raised by true sublimity, it gains a proud step upwards, it is filled with joy and exultation, as though itself had produced what it hears. Whenever therefore anything is heard frequently by a man of sense and literary experience, which does not dispose his mind to high thoughts, nor leave in it material for fresh reflection, beyond what is actually said; while it sinks, if you look carefully at the whole context, and dwindles away, this can never be true sublimity, being preserved so long only as it is heard. That is really great which gives much food for fresh reflection; which it is hard, nay impossible, to resist; of which the memory is strong and indelible. You may take it that those are beautiful and genuine effects of sublimity which please always, and please all. For when men of different habits, lives, ambitions, ages, all take one and the same view about the same writings, the verdict and pronouncement of such dissimilar individuals give a powerful assurance, beyond all gainsaying, in favour of that which they admire.

VIII

NOW there are five different sources, so to call them, of lofty style, which are the most productive; power of expression being presupposed as a foundation common to all five types, and inseparable from any. First and most potent is the faculty of grasping great conceptions, as I have defined it in my work on Xenophon. Second comes

passion, strong and impetuous. These two constituents of sublimity are in most cases native-born, those which now follow come through art: the proper handling of figures, which again seem to fall under two heads, figures of thought, and figures of diction; then noble phraseology, with its subdivisions, choice of words, and use of tropes and of elaboration; and fifthly, that cause of greatness which includes in itself all that preceded it, dignified and spirited composition. Let us now look together at what is included under each of these heads, premising that Caecilius has passed over some of the five for instance, passion. If he did so under the idea that sublimity and feeling are one and the same thing, coexistent and of common origin, he is entirely wrong. For some passions may be found which are distinct from sublimity and are humble, as those of pity, grief, fear; and again, in many cases, there is sublimity without passion; take, besides countless other instances, the poet's own venturesome lines on the Aloadae:

Upon Olympus Ossa, leafy Pelion
On Ossa would they pile, a stair to heaven;

and the yet grander words which follow:

Now had they worked their will.

In the Orators, again, speeches of panegyric, pomp, display, exhibit on every hand majesty and the sublime, but commonly lack passion: hence Orators of much passion succeed least in panegyric, and again the panegyrists are not strong in passion. Or if, on the other hand, Caecilius did not think that passion ever contributes to sublimity, and, therefore held it undeserving of mention, he is quite in error. I should feel confidence in maintaining that nothing reaches great eloquence so surely as genuine passion in the right place; it breathes the vehemence of frenzy and divine possession, and makes the very words inspired.

IX

AFTER all, however, the first element, great natural genius, covers far more ground than the others : therefore, as to this also, even if it be a gift rather than a thing acquired, yet so far as is possible we must nurture our souls to all that is great, and make them, as it were, teem with noble endowment. How ? you will ask. I have myself written in another place to this effect :—'Sublimity is the note which rings from a great mind.' Thus it is that, without any utterance, a notion, unclothed and unsupported, often moves our wonder, because the very thought is great : the silence of Ajax in the book of the Lower World is great, and more sublime than any words. First, then, it is quite necessary to presuppose the principle from which this springs : the true Orator must have no low ungenerous spirit, for it is not possible that they who think small thoughts, fit for slaves, and practise them in all their daily life, should put out anything to deserve wonder and immortality. Great words issue, and it cannot be otherwise, from those whose thoughts are weighty. So it is on the lips of men of the highest spirit that words of rare greatness are found. Take the answer of Alexander to Parmenio, who had said 'I were content . . .'

[*Here about eighteen pages have been lost.*]

. . . *the distance from earth to heaven,*

a measure one may call it of the stature as well of Homer as of Strife. Unlike this is the passage of Hesiod about Gloom (if *The Shield* ir really to be assigned to Hesiod), 'From out her nostrils rheum in streams was poured' : he has made the picture hateful, not terrible. But how does Homer make great all that belongs to gods ?

Far as the region of blank air in sight
Of one who sitting on some beacon height
Views the long wine-dark barrens of the deep,
Such space the horses of the realm of light
Urged by the gods, as on they strain and sweep,
While their hoofs thunder aloft, bound over at one leap.

He measures their leap by the interval of the boundaries of the world. Who might not justly exclaim, when he marked this extravagance in greatness, that, if the horses of the gods make two leaps, leap after leap, they will no longer find room within the world. Passing great too are the appearances in the Battle of the Gods :—

Heav:n sent its clarion forth : Olympus too :

. . . .

Trembled too Hades in his gloomy reign,
And leapt up with a scream, lest o'er his head
Poseidon cleave the solid earth in twain,
And open the pale kingdom of the dead
Horrible, foul with blight, which e'en Immortals dread.

You see, comrade, how, when earth is torn up from its foundations, and Tartarus itself laid bare, and the Universe suffers overthrow and dissolution, all things at once, heaven and hell, things mortal and immortal, mingle in the war and the peril of that fight. Yet all this is terrible indeed, though, unless taken as allegory, thoroughly impious and out of proportion. For when Homer presents to us woundings of the gods, their factions, revenges, tears, bonds, sufferings, all massed together, it seems to me that, as he has done his uttermost to make the men of the Trojan war gods, so he has made the gods men. Only for us, when we are miserable, a harbour from our ills is reserved in death ; the gods, as he draws them, are everlasting, not in their nature, but in their unhappiness. Far better than the "Battle of the Gods' are the passages which show us divinity as something undefiled and truly great, with no admixture ; for instance, to take a passage which has been worked out by many before us, the lines on Poseidon :

Tall mountains and wild woods, from height to height,
The city and the vessels by the main ..
Rocked to the immortal feet that, hurrying, bare
Poseidon in his wrath...

...the light wheels along the sea-plain rolled;
From cave and lair the creatures of the deep
Flocked to sport round him, and the crystal heap
Of waters in wild joy disparting know.
Their lord, and as the fleet pair onward sweep ..

Thus too the lawgiver of the Jews, no common man, when he had duly conceived the power of the Deity, showed it fourth as duly. At the very beginning of his Laws, 'God said,' he writes—What ? 'Let there be light, and there was light, let there be earth, and there was earth.' Perhaps I shall not seem wearisome, comrade, if I quote to you one other passage from the poet, this time on a human theme, that you may learn how he accustoms his readers to enter, with him into majesties which are more than human. Gloom and impenetrable night suddenly cover the battle of the Greeks before him : then Ajax, in his helplessness, says :—

Zeus, sire, do thou the veil of darkness rend,
And make clear daylight, that our eyes may see :
Then in the light e'en slay us—.

Here is the very truth of the passion of Ajax : he does not pray to live—such a petition were too humble for the hero—but when in impracticable darkness he could dispose his valour to no good purpose, chafing that he stands idle for the battle, he prays for light at the speediest, sure of finding therein at the worst a burial worthy of his valour, even if Zeus be arrayed against him Truly the spirit of Homer goes along with every struggle, in full and carrying gale ; he feels the very thing himself, he 'rages ;—

Not fire in densest mountain glade,
Nor spear-armed Ares e'er raged dreadfuller :
Foam started from his lips, ...'

Yet he shows throughout the *Odyssey* (for there are many reasons why we must look closely into passages from that poem also), that, when a great genius begins to decline,

the love of story-telling is a mark of its old age. It is clear from many other indications that this work was the second; but more particularly from the fact that he introduces throughout the *Odyssey* remnants of the sufferings before Ilium, as so many additional episodes of the Trojan war; aye, and renders to its heroes fresh lamentations and words of pity, as though awarded in some far distant time. Yes, the *Odyssey* is nothing but an epilogue of the *Iliad*:—

> *There the brave Aias and Achilleus lie;*
> *Patroclus there, whose wisdom matched the gods on high;*
> *There too Antilochus my son...*

From the same cause, I think, writing the *Iliad* in the heyday of his spirit, he made the whole structure dramatic and combative; that of the *Odyssey* is in the main narrative, which is the special mark of age. So it is that in the *Odyssey* one might liken Homer to a setting sun; the intensity is gone, but there remains the greatness. Here the tone of those great lays of Ilium is no longer maintained—the passages on one level of sublimity with no sinking anywhere, the same stream of passion poured upon passion, the readiness of turn, the closeness to life, the throng of images all drawn from the truth: as when Ocean retires into himself, and is left lonely around his proper bounds, only the ebbings of his greatness are left to our view, and a wandering among the shallows of the fabulous and the incredible. While I say this, I have not forgotten the storms in the *Odyssey*, nor the story of the Cyclops, nor certain other passages; I am describing an old age, but the old age of Homer. Still in all these, as they follow one another, fable prevails over action. I entered upon this digression, as I said, in order to show how very easily great genius, when the prime is passed, is turned aside to trifling: there are the stories of the wine-skin, of the companions turned by Circe to swine (whom Zoilus called 'porkers in tears'), of Zeus fed by doves like a young bird, of Ulysses ten days without food on the

wreck, there are the incredible details of the slaying of the Suitors. What can we call these but in very truth 'dreams of Zeus'? A second reason why the incidents of the *Odyssey* also should be discussed is this; that you may recognize how the decline of passion in great writers and poets passes away into character-drawing: the sketches of the life in the household of Ulysses much resemble a comedy of character.

X

I will now ask you to consider with me whether we may possibly arrive at anything further, which has power to make our writings sublime. Since with all things are associated certain elements, constituents which are essentially inherent in the substance of each, one factor of sublimity must necessarily be the power of choosing the most vital of the included elements, and of making these, by mutual superposition, form as it were a single body. On one side the hearer is attracted by the choice of ideas, on another by the accumulation of those which have been chosen. Thus Sappho, in all cases, takes the emotions incident to the frenzy of love from the attendant symptoms and from actual truth. But wherein does she show her great excellence? In her power of first selecting and then closely combining those which are conspicuous and intense:—

Blest as the immortal gods is he
The youth whose eyes may look on thee,
Whose ears thy tongue's sweet melody
May still devour.

Thou smilest too!—sweet smile, whose charm
Has struck my soul with wild alarm,
And, when I see thee, bids disarm
Each vital power.

Speechless I aze : the flame within
Runs swift o'er all my quivering skin ;
My eyeballs swim ; with dizzy din
My brain eels round ;

And cold drop fall ; and tremblings frail
Seize every limb ; and grassy pale
I grow ; and then—together fail
Both sight and sound.

Do you not marvel how she seeks to gather soul and body into one, hearing and tongue, eyes and complexion ; all dispersed and strangers before : now, by a series of contradictions, she is cold at once and burns, is irrational, is sensible (for she is either in terror or at the point of death), so that it may not appear to be a single passion which is upon her, but an assemblage of passions ? All the symptoms are found severally in lovers ; to the choice of those which are conspicuous, and to their concentration into one, is due the pre-eminent merit here. So it is, I think, with the Poet and his storms ; he picks out the grimmest of the attendant circumstances. The author of the *Arimaspeia* thinks these lines terrible :—

Here too is mighty marvel for our thought :
Mid seas men dwell, on water, far from land :
Wretches they are, for sorry toil is theirs ;
Eyes on the stars, heart on the deep they fix.
Oft to the gods, I ween, their hands are raised,
Their inward parts in evil case upheaved.

Any one, I think, will see that there is more embroidery than terror in it all. Now for Homer ; take one instance out of many :—

As when a wave swoln by the wild wind's blore
Down from the clouds upon a ship doth light.

And the whole hulk with scattering foam is white,
And through the sails all tattered forlorn
Roars the fell blast : the seamen with affright
Shake, out from death a hand-breadth they are borne.

Aratus has attempted to transfer this very notion :—

Tiny the plank which thrusts grim death away.

Only the result is petty and smooth, not terrible. Moreover, he makes the danger limited, by the words 'the plank thrusts death away' : and so it does ! Again our Poet does not limit the terror to one occurrence ; he gives us the picture of men meeting destruction continually, well-nigh in every wave. Yet again, by forcing together prepositions naturally inconsistent, and compelling them to combine (I refer to the words 'out from death'), he has so strained the verse as to match the trouble which fell upon them ; has so pressed it together as to give the very presentment of that trouble ; has stamped, I had almost said, upon the language the form and features of the peril : 'out from death a handbreadth they are borne.' Just so Archilochus in describing the shipwreck, and Demosthenes, when the news of Elateia comes : 'For it was evening,' he says. They chose the expressions of real eminence, looking only to merit (if one may use the word), took them out clean, and placed them one upon another, introducing between them nothing trivial, or undignified, or low. For such things mar the whole effect, much as, in building, massive blocks, intended to cohere and hold together in one, are spoilt by stop-gaps and rubble.

XI

CLOSELY connected with the excellencies which I have named is that called Amplification ; in which, when the facts and issues admit of several fresh beginnings and fresh halting-places, in periodic arrangement, great phrases come rolling upon others which have gone before, in a continuously ascending order. Whether this be done by

way of enlarging upon commonplace topics, or of exaggeration, or of intensifying facts or reasoning, or of handling deeds done or suffering endured (for their are numberless varieties of amplification), the orator must in any case know that none of these can possibly stand by itself without sublimity as a perfect structure. The only exceptions are where pity or depreciation are required; in all other processes of amplification, take away the sublime, and you will take soul out of body; they are effective no longer, and become nerveless and hollow unless braced by passages of sublimity. But, for clearness' sake, I must shortly lay down wherein the difference lies between my present precepts, and what I said above (there I spoke of a sketch embracing the principal ideas and arranging them into one); and the broad difference between Amplification and Sublimity.

XII

I am not satisfied with the definition given by the technical writers. Amplification is, they say, language which invests the subject with greatness. Of course this definition may serve in common for sublimity, and passion, and tropes, since they, too, invest that language with greatness of a particular kind. To me it seems that they differ from one another in this, that Sublimity lies in intensity, Amplification also in multitude; consequently sublimity often exists in a single idea, amplification necessarily implies quantity and abundance. Amplification is—to define it in outline—an accumulation of all the parts and topics inherent in a subject, strengthening the fabric of the argument by insistence; and differs in this from rhetorical proof that the latter seeks to demonstrate the point required...

[*Here about six pages have been lost.*]

In richest abundance, like a very sea, Plato often pours into an open expanse of grandeur. Hence it is, I think, that, if we look to style, the Orator, appealing more

strongly to passions, has a large element of fire and of spirit aglow; Plato, calm in his stately and dignified magnificence, I will not say, is cold, but is not so intense. It is on these and no other points, as it seems to me, dear Terentianus (that is, if we as Greeks are allowed to form an opinion), that Cicero and Demosthenes differ in their grand passages. Demosthenes' strength is in sheer height of sublimity, that of Cicero in its diffusion. Our countryman, because he burns and ravages all in his violence, swift, strong, terrible, may be compared to a lightning flash or a thunderbolt. Cicero, like a spreading conflagration, ranges and rolls over the whole field; the fire which burns is within him, plentiful and constant, distributed at his will now in one part, now in another, and fed with fuel in relays. These are points on which you can judge: certainly the moment for the sublimity and tension of Demosthenes is where accumulated invective and strong passion are in play, and generally where the hearer is to be hard struck: the moment for diffusion is where he is to be flooded with detail, as it is always appropriate in enlargement upon commonplaces, in perorations, and digressions, and in all passages written for the style and for display, in scientific and physical exposition, and in several other branches of literature.

XIII

THAT Plato (to return to him) flowing 'in some such noiseless stream', none the less reaches greatness, you will not fail to recognize, since you have read the *Republic,* and know this typical passage :—'Those who are unversed in wisdom and virtue,' it runs, 'and spend all their days in feastings and the like, are borne downwards, and wander so through life. They never yet raised their eyes to the true world above them, nor were lifted up, nor tasted of solid or pure pleasure; but, like cattle, looking down, and bowed to earth and to the table, they feed and fill themselves and gender; and in the greediness of these desires they kick and butt one another with horns and hoofs of iron, and kill because they cannot be satisfied.'

This author shows us, if we would choose not to neglect the lesson, that there is also another road, besides all that we have mentioned, which leads to the sublime. What, and what manner of road is that? Imitation and emulation of great writers and poets who have been before us. Here is our mark, my friend, let us hold closely to it: for many are borne along inspired by a breath which comes from another; even as the story is that the Pythian prophetess, approaching the tripod, where is a cleft in the ground, inhales, so they say, vapour sent by a god; and then and there, impregnated by the divine power, sings her inspired chants; even so from the great genius of the men of old do streams pass off to the souls of those who emulate them, as though from holy caves; inspired by which, even those not too highly susceptible to the god are possessed by the greatness which was in others.

Was Herodotus alone 'most Homeric'? There was Stesichorus before him, and Archilochus; but, more than any, Plato drew into himself from that Homeric fountain countless runlets and channels of water. (Perhaps we ought to have given examples, had not Ammonius drawn up a selection under headings.) Here is no theft, but such a rendering as is made from beautiful spectacles or from carvings or other works of art. I do not think that there would be such a bloom as we find on some of his philosophical dogmas, or that he could have entered so often into poetical matter and expressions, unless he had entered for the first place against Homer, aye, with all his soul, a young champion against one long approved; and striven for the mastery, too emulously perhaps and in the spirit of the lists, yet not without his reward; for 'good,' says Hesiod, 'is this strife for mortals.' Yes, that contest for fame is fair, and its crown worthy of the winning, wherein even to be defeated by our forerunners is not inglorious.

XIV

THEREFORE even we, when we are working out a theme which requires lofty speech and greatness of thought,

do well to imagine within ourselves how, if need were, Homer would have said this same thing, how Plato or Demosthenes, or, in history, Thucydides would have made it sublime. The figures of those great men will meet us on the way while we vie with them, they will stand out before our eyes, and lead our souls upwards towards the measure of the ideal which we have conjured up. Still more so if we add to our mental picture this; how would Homer, were he here, have listened to this phrase of mine? or Demosthenes? how would they have felt at this? 'Truly great is this competition, where we assume for our own words such a jury, such an audience, and pretend that before judges and witnesses of that heroic build we undergo a scrutiny of what we write. Yet more stimulating than all will it be if you add: 'If I write this, in what spirit will all future ages hear me?' If any man fear this consequence, that he may say something which shall pass beyond his own day and his own life, then all which such a soul can grasp must needs be barren, blunted, dull; for it posthumous fame can bring no fulfilment.

XV

WEIGHT, grandeur, and energy of speaking are further produced in a very high degree, young friend, by appeals to Imagination, called by some 'image making.' Imagination is no doubt a name given generally to anything which suggests, no matter how, a thought which engenders speech; but the word has in our time come to be applied specially to those cases, where, moved by enthusiasm and passion, you seem to see the things of which you speak, and place them under the eyes of your hearers. Imagination means one thing in rhetoric, another with the poets; and you cannot fail to observe that the object of the latter is to amaze, of the former to give distinctness; both, however, seek to stir the mind strongly.

My mother, never hound these maids on me,
Of bloody visages and snaky locks:
Here! here! upon me, nearer yet they leap!

and

Alas ! she'll slay me : whither may I flee ?

There the poet saw the Furies with his own eyes, and what his imagination presented he almost compelled his hearers to behold. Now Euripides is most painstaking in employing for the purposes of Tragedy the two passions of madness and love, and is more successful with these than, so far as I know, with any others ; not that he lacks boldness in essaying other efforts of imagination. Though his own natural genius was far from being great, he yet forced it in many instances to become tragic : in every detail of his great passages, as the poet has it,

Sides and loins he lashes to and fro
With his swift tail, and stirs up battle's thirst.

Thus Helios, handing over the reins to Phaethon, says :—

But drive thou not within the Libyan clime,
Th' unmoistened burning air will split thy car.

Then he goes on :—

Right for the seven Pleiads shape thy course :
So spake the sire ; the son now grasped the reins,
And lashed the flanks of those winged coursers. They,
Set free, sped onwards through th' expanse of air :
The sire, astride great Sirius in the rear,
Rode, and the boy instructed :—thither drive !
Here wheel thy car, yea here !

Would you not say that the soul of the writer treads the car with the driver, and shares the peril, and wears wings, as the horses do ; such details could never have been imagined by it, if it had not moved in that heavenly display, and kept even pace. So in his Cassandra, 'Ho, ye horse loving Trojans.........'

Now, whereas Aeschylus hazards the most heroic flights of imagination, as where the Seven chieftains against Thebes, in the play of that name :—

Seven impetuous warriors, captains bold,
Slaying the sacred bull o'er black-rimm'd shields
And touching with their hands the victim's gore,
Ares, Enyo, and blood-thirsting Fear
Invoked, and swear...

swearing to one another oaths of death, each man of his own, with 'no word of ruth'; yet sometimes produces thoughts which are not wrought out, but left in the rough, and harsh; Euripides in emulation forces himself upon the same perils. Thus in Aeschylus the palace of Lycurgus is troubled by the Gods in a manner passing strange when Dionysus is made manifest :—

See how the palace is possessed, its halls
Are all a revel...

Euripides has smoothed this over and worded it differently :—

And all the mountain joined their revelry.

Sophocles has used imagination finely about the dying Oedipus, when he passes to his own burial amidst elemental portents; and again where Achilles, as the Greeks are sailing away, appears to them above his tomb, just when they were standing out to sea, an appearance which no one has expressed with more vivid imagery than Simonides; but it is impossible to put down all instances. We may, however, say generally, that those found in poets admit an excess which passes into the mythical and goes beyond all that is credible; in rhetorical imagination that which has in it reality and truth is always best. Deviations from this rule become strange and exotic when the texture of the speech is poetic and mythical. and passes into impossibility of every sort; surely we need look no further than to our

own clever orators, who, like tragedians, see Furies, and cannot, honest gentlemen, learn so much as this, that when Orestes says :—

> *Unhand me ; one of my own Furies thou ;*
> *Dost grasp my waist, to thrust me down to hell ?*

he imagines all this because he is mad. What then can imagination in rhetoric do ? It can probably contribute much else to our speeches in energy and passion ; but certainly in passages dealing with facts an admixture of it not only persuades a listener, but makes him its slave. 'Now mark me,' says Demosthenes, 'if at this very moment a cry should be heard in front of our courts, and then one said that the prison has been opened, and the prisoners are escaping, there is no one, be he old or young, so careless but will help all he can. But if one were to come forward and say, that the man who released them is now before you, that man would have no hearing, and would instantly die.' So Hyperides when put on his trial, because he had proposed, after our defeat, to make the slaves free ; 'This proposal,' he said, was moved not by the Orator, but by the battle at Chaeroneia' ; here, while he deals with the facts, he at the same time has used imagination, the audacity of the conception has born him outside and beyond persuasion. In all such instances it is a fact of nature that we listen to that which is strongest. We are therefore drawn away from mere demonstration to that which has in it imagination and surprise, the element of fact being wrapped and lost amid the light which shines around it. This process is only what we might expect ; when two forces are combined in one, the stronger always attracts into itself the potency of the other.

What I have now written about the sublime effects which belong to high thoughts, and which are produced by the greatness of man's soul, and secondarily by imitation, or by imagination, will suffice.

20/12/81.

XVI

HERE comes the place reserved for Figures, our next topic; for these, if handled as they ought to be, should, as I said, form no minor element in greatness. As however it would be a laborious, or rather an unlimited task to give an accurate enumeration of all, we will go through a few of those productive of greatness of speech, in order to make good my assertion, and will begin thus. Demosthenes is offering a demonstration in defending his public acts. Now what was the natural way to deal with it? 'You made no mistake, men of Athens, when you took upon yourselves the struggle for the freedom of the Greeks: you have examples of this near home. For they also made no mistake who fought at Marathon, at Salamis, at Plataea.' But when, as one suddenly inspired and possessed, he breaks out with that oath by the bravest men of Greece: 'It cannot be that you made a mistake; no, by those who bore the brunt at Marathon,' he appears by use of a single figure, that of adjuration (which here I call apostrophe), to have deified those ancestors; suggesting the thought that we ought to swear, as by gods, by men who died so; and implanting in the judges the spirit of the men who there hazarded their lives of old; changing the very nature of demonstration into sublimity and passion of the highest order, and the assured conviction of new and more than natural oaths; and, withal, infusing into the souls of his hearers a plea of sovereign and specific virtue; that so, relieved by the medicine of his words of praise, they should be brought to pride themselves no less on the battle against Philip than on the triumphs won at Marathon and at Salamis. Doing all this, he caught his hearers up and bore them with him, by his use of a figure.

It is said, I know, that the germ of this oath is found in Eupolis:—

I swear by Marathon, the fight, my fight,
No man of them unscathed shall vex my heart.

But then it is not the mere swearing by a name which is great; place, manner, occasion, purpose are all essential. In these lines there is an oath, and that is all; it is addressed to Athenians when prosperous and needing no comfort; besides the poet has not made immortals of the men, and sworn by them, that so he may implant within the hearts of his hearers a worthy record of their valour; he has passed away from the men who bore the brunt to the inanimate thing, the battle. In Demosthenes the oath has been framed to suit beaten men, that so Chaeroneia might appear a failure no longer; it is, as I said, at once a demonstration that they made no mistake, an example, an assurance resting on oaths, a word of praise, an exhortation. And whereas the orator was liable to be met by this objection: 'You are speaking of a defeat under your administration, and yet you swear by victories,' in the next words he squares his phrase by rule, and makes his very words safe, giving us a lesson that 'even in Bacchic transports we must yet be sober.' 'By those who bore the brunt,' are his words, 'at Marathon, by those who fought on sea by Salamis and off Artemisium, by those who stood in the ranks at Plataea!' Nowhere does he say 'who conquered,' but throughout he has furtively kept back the word which should give the result, because that result was a happy one, the contrary to that of Chaeroneia. Therefore he gives his hearer no time, and at once adds:—'To all of whom the city gave public burial, Aeschines, not to those only who succeeded.'

XVII

AT this point I must not omit, my dear friend, to state one of my own conclusions. It shall be given quite concisely, and is this. As though by nature the figures ally themselves with sublimity, and in turn are marvellously supported by the alliance. Where and how this is so, I will explain. There is a peculiar prejudice against a promiscuous use of the figures: it suggests a suspicion of ambuscade, plot, sophistry; and the more so when the speech is addressed to a judge with adsolute powers, above all to tyrants, kings, magistrates of the highest rank: anyof

these at once becomes indignant, if he feels that there is an attempt to outwit him, like a silly child, by the paltry figure of a skilled orator; he takes the fallacy to be used in contempt for himself, and either rages like a wild beast, or, if he master his wrath, yet is wholly disinclined to be convinced by the arguments. Accordingly a figure is best, when the very fact that it is a figure passes unnoticed. Therefore sublimity and passion are a help against the suspicion attaching to the use of figures, and a resource of marvellous power; because the treacherous art, being once associated with what is beautiful and great, enters and remains, without exciting the least suspicion. This is sufficiently proved in the words quoted above, 'By the men who fought at Marathon!' By what device has the orator concealed the figure? Clearly, by its very light Much as duller lights are extinguished in the encircling beams of the sun, so the artifices of rhetoric are obscured by the grandeur poured about them. An effect not far removed from this occurs in painting. When colours are used, and the light and the shadow lie upon the same surface beside one another, the light meets the eye before the shadow, and seems not only more prominent, but also much nearer. So it is in speeches; sublimity and passion, lying closer to our souls, always come into view sooner than the figures, because of what I may call natural kinship, and also of brilliance; the artfulness of the figures is thrown into shadow, and, as it were, veiled.

XVIII

WHAT are we to say of the Questions and Interrogations, which come next? Is it not true that, by the very form which this figure takes, our orator gives intensity to his language and makes it much more effective and vehement? 'Or do ye wish (answer me, sir!) to go round and inquire one of another: "is there any news?" What can be greater news than this, that a man of Macedonia is subduing Greece? Is Philip dead? Not dead, Heaven knows, but sick. What matter to you? if anything happen to him, you will quickly make you another Philip.' Again,

'Let us sail to Macedonia. "What harbour shall we ever find to put into ?" asked some one. War will discover for itself the weak points in Philip's resources.' The thing put simply would be quite inadequate : as it is, the rush and swift return of question and answer, and the meeting of his own difficulty as if it came from another, make the words not only more sublime by his use of the figure, but actually more convincing. For passionate language is more attractive when it seems to be born of the occasion, rather than deliberately adopted by the speaker : question and answer carried on with a man's self reproduce the spontaneity of passion. Much as those who are questioned by others, when spurred by the sudden appeal, meet the point vigorously and with the plain truth, so it is with the figure of question and answer ; it draws the hearer off till he thinks that each point in the inquiry has been raised and put into words without preparation, and so imposes upon him. Again (for the instance from Herodotus has passed for one of the most sublime), if it be thus...

[*Here about six pages have been lost.*]

XIX

THE words drop unconnected, and are, so to say, poured forth, almost too fast for the speaker himself. 'Locking their shields,' says Xenophon, 'they pushed, fought, slew, died.' Or take the words of Eurylochus in Homer :—

> *E'en as thou bad'st, we ranged the thickets through,*
> *We found a house fair fashioned in a glade.*

Phrases cut off from one another, yet spoken rapidly, carry the impression of a struggle, where the meaning is at once checked and hurried on. Such an effect Homer has produced by his Asyndeta.

XX

AN excellent and stirring effect is often given by the concurrence of figures, when two or three mingled in one

company throw into a common fund their force, cogency, beauty. Thus in the speech against Midias we have Asyndeta interwoven with repetitions and vivid presentation. 'There are many things which the striker might do, yet some of which the person struck could never tell another, by gesture, by look, by voice.' Then, in order that the passage may not continue travelling in the same track (for rest shows calm, disarrangement passion, which is a rush and a stirring of the mind), he passes with a bound to fresh Asyndeta and to repetitions: 'by gesture, by look, by voice; when in insult, when in enmity, when with fists, when as slave.' In these phrases the orator does what the striker did, he belabours the intellect of the judges by the speed of blow following blow. Then he goes back from this point, and makes a fresh onset, as gusts of wind do; 'when with fists, when on the face,' he goes on, 'these things stir, these make men frantic, to whom insult is not familiar. No one by telling of these things could possibly represent their atrocity.'

Thus he keeps up in essence throughout the passage his repetitions and Asyndeta, while he continually varies them; so that his order is disorderly, and again his violation of order has in it order of a kind.

XXI

NOW insert, if you will, conjunctions, as the school of Isocrates does: 'Again we must not omit this point either, that there are many things which the striker might do, first by gesture, and then by look, and yet further by his very voice': if you rewrite the passage in full sequence, you will recognize how the press and rough effectiveness of passion, when smoothed to one level by conjunctions, fails to pierce the ear, and its fire at once goes out. For as, if one should tie up the limbs of runners, their speed is gone, so passion chafes to be shackled by conjunctions and other additions. The freedom of running is destroyed, and the momentum as of bolt from catapult.

XXII

UNDER the same head we must set cases of Hyperbaton. This is a disturbance of the proper sequence of phrases or thoughts, and is the surest impress of vehement passion. For as those who are really angry, or in fear, or indignant, or who fall under the influence of jealousy or any other passion (for passions are many, nay countless, past the power of man to reckon), are seen to put forward one set of ideas, then spring aside to another, thrusting in a parenthesis out of all logic, then wheel round to the first, and in their excitement, like a ship before an unsteady gale, drag phrases and thoughts sharply across, now this way, now that, and so divert the natural order into turnings innumerable ; so is it in the best writers : imitation of nature leads them by way of Hyperbata to the effects of nature. For art is perfect just when it seems to be nature, and nature successful when the art underlies it unnoticed. Take the speech of Dionysius of Phocaea in Herodotus : — 'Our fortunes rest on the edge of a razor, O Ionians, whether we are to be free or slaves, aye runaway slaves. Now, therefore, if you choose to take up hardships, there is toil for you in the present, but you will be able to overcome your enemies.' The natural order was, 'O Ionians, now is the time for you to accept toils, for our fortunes rest on the edge of a razor.' He has transposed the words 'Men of Ionia,' starting at once with the mention of the fear, and entirely omitting, in view of the pressing terror, to find time to name his audience. Then he has inverted the order of the thoughts. Before saying that they must endure toil (which is the point of this exhortation), he first assigns the cause why they should do so : 'our fortunes', he says, 'rest on the edge of a razor' ; so that his words seem not to have been prepared, but to be forced out of him. Even more marvellous is Thucydides in the skill with which he separates, by the use of Hyperbata, things which nature has made one and inseparable. Demosthenes is not so arbitrary as he ; yet he is never tired of the use of this figure in all its applications ; the effect of vehemence which he produces by transposition is great, and also that

of speaking on the call of the moment ; besides all this he draws his hearers with him to face the hazards of his long Hyperbata. For he often leaves suspended the thought with which he began, and interposes, as though he struck into a train of reasoning foreign to it and dissimilar, matter which he rolls upon other matter, all drawn from some source outside, till he strikes his hearer with fear that an entire collapse of the sentence will follow, and forces him by mere vehemence to share the risk with the speaker : then, when you least expect, after a long interval, he makes good the thought which has so long been owing, and works in his own way to a happy conclusion : making the whole a great deal more impressive by the very hazard and imminence of failure which goes with his Hyperbata. Let us spare instances : there are so many.

XXIII

NEXT come the figures of many cases, so-called ; groupings, changes, gradations, which are very effective, as you know, and work in with ornament. sublimity of every kind, and passion. Only look at variations of case, tense, person, number, gender : how they embroider and enliven our expressions ! Of those which are concerned with number, I assert that not only are those instances ornamental where the form is singular, and the meaning, when you look into them, is found to be plural :—

At once the people in its multitude
Break man from man, shout 'tunny !' o'er the beach ;

but the other class deserves even more attention, because there are cases where plurals fall on the ear with grander effect, andcatch our applause by the effect of multitude which the number gives. Take an instance from Sophocles in the *Oedipus* :—

O marriage rites
That gave me birth, and having borne me, gave
To me in turn an offspring, and ye showed
Fathers and sons, and brothers, all in one,

Mothers and wives, and daughters, hateful names,
All foulest deeds that men have ever done.

All these express one name, Oedipus, and on the other side Jocasta ; but for all that, the number, spread out into plurals, has made the misfortunes plural also ; or in another case of many for one : 'Forth Hectors issued and Sarpedons.' And there is the passage of Plato, which I have quoted also in another place, about the Athenians :—

'No Pelopses, nor Cadmuses, nor Aegyptuses, nor Danai, nor other of the natural-born barbarian dwell here with us ; pure Greeks with no cross of barbarian blood are we that dwell in the land,' and so forth. For things strike on the ear with more sonorous effect when the names are thus piled upon one another in groups. Yet this should be done in those case alone where the subject admits of enlargement, or multiplication, or hyperbole, or passion, either one of these, or several : for we know that to go everywhere 'hung about with bells' is a sophist's trick indeed.

XXIV

YET, on the other hand, contraction from plural to singular sometimes produces an effect conspicuously sublime. 'Then all Peloponnesus was ranged on different sides,' says the Orator. And look at this, 'when Phrynichus exhibited his drama, the *Taking of Miletus*, the whole theatre fell into tears.' Where separate individuals are compressed into unity the notion of a single body is produced. In both cases the cause of the ornamental effect is the same : where terms are properly singular, to turn them into plurals shows emotion into which the speaker is surprised ; where plural, to bring several individuals under one sonorous head is a change in the opposite direction, and equally unexpected.

XXV

AGAIN, where you introduce things past and done as happening in the actual present, you will make your account no longer a narrative but a living action. 'A man who has fallen under the horse of Cyrus,' says Xenophon, 'and is being trampled, strikes his sword into the belly of the horse : the horse plunges and unseats Cyrus, and he falls.' So Thucydides in most instances.

XXVI

EFFECTIVE also in the same way is the transposition of persons, which often makes a hearer think that he is moving in the midst of the dangers described :—

Of toughest kind
Thou wouldst have called those hosts, so manfully
Each fought with each.

And Aratus has :—

Not in that month may seas about thee surge !

In much the s.me way Herodotus : 'You will sail up stream from the city Elephantina, and then you will come to a level plain. Passing through this tract, you will again embark on another and sail for two days ; then you will reach a great city, whose name is Meroe.' You see, comrade, how he takes your spirit with him through the place, and turns hearing into seeing. All such passages, being addressed to the reader in his own person, make him take his place at the very centre of the action. Again, when you speak as though to a single individual, not to all :—

Nor of the son of Tydeus couldst thou know
If he with Trojans or Achaians were ;

you will render him more moved by the passions and also more attentive ; he is filled full of the combat, because he is roused by being himself addressed.

XXVII

THEN there are other cases where the writer is giving a narrative about the person, and by a sudden transition himself passes into that person ; in this class there is an outburst of passion :—

But Hector warned the Trojans with loud cry,
To rush upon the ships, and pass the plunder by :
'But whom elsewhere than at the ships I sight,
Death shall be his that moment.'

Here the poet has assigned the narrative part to himself, as is fitting : the sharp threat he has suddenly, without previous explanation, attached to the angry chieftain : it would have been cold had he inserted 'Hector then said so and so,' whereas now the change of construction has anticipated the poet's change of speaker.

Hence the proper use of the figure is where the occasion is short and sharp, and does not allow the writer to stop, but forces him to hurry from person to person, as in Hecataeus : 'Ceyx, indignant at this, at once commanded the Heraclidae of the later generation to leave the country : "for I have no power to help you ; therefore, that you may not perish yourselves, and inflict a wound on me, depart to another people."' Demosthenes, in his Aristogeiton speech, has found a different method to throw passion and swiftness into this change of persons : 'And will none of you be found,' he says, 'to entertain wrath or indignation at the violence of this shameless miscreant : who, thou foulest of mankind, when thy effrontery is stopped, not by barriers nor by gates, such as man might open——' He has not finished what he intended, but passing quickly aside, and, I had almost said, splitting a single sentence between two persons, because he is so angry—'Who, thou foulest of mankind,' he says ; with the result that, having turned his speech away from Aristogeiton, and having done with him, you think, he directs it upon him again with far more intensity through the passion.

Much in the same way Penelope :—

What brings thee, herald, thee, the pioneer
Of these imperious suitors ? Do they send
To bid the servants of my husband dear
Of their appointed task-work to make end,
And on their lordly revelries attend ?
Never elsewhere may they survive to meet !
Here in these halls, while our estates they rend,
May they their latest and their last now eat,
Who thus with outrage foul Telemachus entreat,
Ye to your parents heedful ear lend none,
Nor hearken how Odysseus lived of yore.

XXVIII

NO one I think would be in doubt as to Periphrasis being a factor of sublimity. For as in music Paraphones make the principal melody sweeter, so Periphrasis often chimes in with the plain expression, and the concurrence adds to the beauty, more especially if it have not any windy, unmusical effect, but be pleasantly compounded. In proof of this it will be sufficient to quote Plato at the beginning of the Funeral Speech :—'Of all that we can give, these have now what is rightly theirs, and, having received it, they pass on their appointed journey, escorted publicly by the city, personally each man by those of his kin.' Here he has called death an 'appointed journey,' and the bestowal of the usual rites 'a public escort given by their country.' Is the dignity added to the thought by these turns but a small matter ? Or has he rather taken language plain and unadorned, and made it melodious by pouring around it the harmonies which came of periphrasis? Xenophon again :—'Ye reckon toil to be the guide to happy life, and have received it into your souls as the fairest and the most gallant of all possessions : for ye take more delight in being praised than in any other thing.' By calling toil 'the guide to happy life,' and giving a like expansion to

the other points, he has attached to his words of praise a great and definite thought. And that inimitable phrase of Herodotus :—'On those of the Scythians who plundered the temple the goddess sent a plague which made them women.'

XXIX

YET Periphrasis is exposed to special risks, more special than any of the figures, if used by a writer without sense of proportion : for it falls feebly on the ear, and savours of trifling and of rank stupidity. So when Plato, (for he always employs the figure with great force, occasionally out of season,) says in the *Laws* : 'we must not allow wealth, either of silver or of gold, to be established in the city and settle there,' mocking critics say that, if he had wanted to forbid them to possess sheep, he would clearly have talked of 'wealth of sheep and wealth of cattle.'

Enough however of this disquisition (which came in by way of parenthesis) on the use of figures in producing sublime effects, all those which we have mentioned make speeches more passionate and stirring ; and passion is as large an ingredient in sublimity as sense of character in an agreeable style.

XXX

NEXT, since the thought and the diction of a speech are in most cases mutually interlaced, I will ask you to consider with me whether any particulars of what concerns expression still remain. That a choice of the right words and of grand words wonderfully attracts and charms hearers —that this stands very high as a point of practice with all orators and all writers, because, of its own inherent virtue, it brings greatness, beauty, raciness, weight, strength, matery, and an exultation all its own, to grace our words, as though they were the fairest statues—that imparts to mere facts a soul which has speech—it may perhaps be superfluous to set out at length, for my readers know it.

For beautiful words are, in a real and special sense, the light of thought. Yet their majesty is not of service in all places: to apply to trifling details grand and solemn words would appear much the same as if one were to fasten a large tragic mask upon a little child. Yet in poetry...

[*Here about twelve pages have been lost.*]

XXXI

... very rich and pithy; and this of Anacreon :—

The Thracian filly has no more my care.

So too the novel phrase of Theopompus has merit, from the closeness of the correspondence it appears to me most expressive, yet Caecilius has strangely found fault with it. 'Philip,' he says, 'has a rare power of stomaching facts.' So vulgar idiom is sometimes much more expressive than ornamental language; it is recognized at once as a touch of common life; and what is familiar is on the way to be credible. Therefore, when applied to a man who patiently puts up with and enjoys what is mean and repulsive in order to better himself, the phrase adopted, 'to stomach,' is very telling. So in Herodotus :—'Then Cleomenes went mad, and cut his own flesh with the knife into little strips, until he had made collops of himself and so died.' And 'Pythes held on to his ship and fought until he was chopped to pieces.' These scrape the corner of vulgar idiom, but they are not vulgar because they are so expressive.

XXXII

AS to number of Metaphors, Caecilius appears to agree with those who lay down a rule allowing two, or at the most three, applied to the same object. About such figures again Demosthenes is the true standard, and the time for their use is, when passions are driven onwards like a torrent, and draw with themselves, as necessary to the passage the multiplication of metaphors.

'Men foul and flatterers,' he says, 'having mutilated their fatherlands, every one of them, having pledged away their freedom in wine, first to Philip, now to Alexander, measuring happiness by their belly and by the appetites which are most shameful, having thrown to the ground that freedom and that life without a master, wherein the Greeks of old found their very standard and definition of good.' Here the orator's wrath against the traitors screens the number of the metaphors used. Accordingly Aristotle and Theophrastus say that bold metaphors are softened by such devices as the insertion of 'as though,' and 'as it were,' and 'if I may speak thus,' and 'if I am right in using a somewhat venturesome phrase'; for 'qualification,' they say, 'cures bold expression' For myself, I accept all these; yet I affirm, as I said in speaking of figures, that bursts of passion, being seasonable and vehement, and sublimity when genuine, are sure specifics for numerous and daring metaphors; because as they surge and sweep, they naturally draw everything their own way, and force it onwards, rather, I would say, they require and exact bold metaphors, and do not allow the hearer leisure to go into questions of their number, because the speaker's excitement is his. Yet further, in speeches about commonplaces and in set descriptions, nothing is so expressive as continued and successive tropes. It is by means of these that in Xenophon the anatomy of man's bodily tabernacle is painted with so much magnificence, and still more admirably in Plato. The head he calls the citadel; between this and the chest an isthmus has been constructed, the neck, to which vertebrae have been attached like hinges; pleasure is a bait tempting men to their hurt, and the tongue supplies the test of taste; the heart is the knot of the veins, and the fountain of the blood which courses violently around, is appointed to be the guard-house. The passages or pores he calls lanes. 'For the beating of the heart, in the expectation of danger or on the summons of wrath, because it is a fiery organ, they devised a resource, introducing the structure of the lungs, which are soft and bloodless, and perforated with cavities like a sponge, in order that, when wrath boils up within it, the heart may beat upon a yeilding substance, and so receive

no hurt.' The chamber where the appetites dwell he styled the women's chamber, that where the passions, the men's chamber. The spleen is a napkin for the parts within; filled with their purgings it grows large and unsound. 'After this,' he goes on, 'they enshrouded all with fleshy parts, placing the flesh in front, to be a protection from matter outside, like layers of felt.' He called blood the food of the fleshy parts. 'And for the sake of nourishment they made water-courses through the body, like water-courses cut in gardens, that the currents of the veins might run as from an inflowing stream, the body being a narrow canal.' But when the end is at hand, he says that the cables of the souls are loosed, as though of a ship, and it is let go free. Countless similar details follow: those which we have set down suffice to show how grand in their nature tropical expressions are, and how metaphors produce sublimity, and that impassioned and descriptive passages admit them most readily. Yet that the use of tropes, like all other beauties of style, leads writers on to neglect proportion, is clear without my saying it. For it is upon these especially that critics pull Plato to pieces, he is often led on, as though his style were possessed, into untempered and harsh metaphors and protentous allegory. 'For it is not easy to realize,' he says, 'that a city ought to be mixed like a cup, whereinto mad wine is poured and boils; yet, when chastened by another and a temperate god, in that fair partnership forms an honest and a sober draught.' For to call water 'a temperate god,' they say, and admixture 'chastening,' is the mark of a poet who is anything but sober. Caecilius however, taking up such weak points as this in his pamphlets in praise of Lysias, actually dared to make out Lysias better all round than Plato, mixing up two different feelings: for loving Lysias more than he loved himself, he yet hates Plato more thoroughly than he loves Lysias. Only he is carried away by combativeness, nor are his premisses admitted as he thought them to be. For he puts forward his orator as without a fault and clear in his record, as against Plato who had made many mistakes. The fact is not so, nor anything like it.

XXXIII

COME now: let us find some writer who is really clear and beyond criticism. Upon this point, is it not worth while to raise the question in a general form, whether in poems and prose writings a greatness with some failings is the better, or a genius which is limited in its successes, but is always sound and never drops? Aye, and this further question; whether the first prize should be carried off by the most numerous excellences in literature or by the greatest? These questions are germane to the subject of Sublimity, and absolutely require a decision. I know, for my own part, that genius of surpassing greatness has always the least clear record. Precision in every detail comes perilously near littleness; in great natures, as in great fortunes, there ought to be something which may even be neglected. Further, this may perhaps be a necessary law, that humble or modest genius, which never runs a risk, and never aims at excellence, remains in most cases without a failure and in comparative safety; but that what is great is hazardous by very reason of the greatness. Not that I fail to recognize this second law, that all human things are more easily recognized on their worse side; that the memory of failures remains indelible, while that of the good points passes quickly away. I have myself brought forward not a few failures in Homer and in others of the very greatest, yet never take pleasure in their slips, which I do not call voluntary mistakes, but rather oversights caused by the random, haphazard carelessness of great genius, and passed unmarked by it; and I remain unshaken in my opinion, that in all cases great excellence, although not kept up to one level throughout, should always bear off first award, if for nothing else, yet for the sake of simple intellectual greatness. To take an instance, Apollonius in the *Argonautae* is a poet who never drops, and Theocritus in his *Pastorals* is most successful, except as to a few extraneous matters: now this being so, would you not rather be Homer than Apollonius? Take again Eratosthenes in the *Erigone*, a little poem with nothing in it to blame; is he a greater poet than Archilochus, who

drags much ill-arranged matter along in that outpouring of divine inspiration which it is difficult to range under a law? In lyrics again, would you choose to be Bacchylides rather than Pindar, in Tragedy Ion of Chios than Sophocles himself? These poets no doubt never drop, their language is always smooth and the writing beautiful, whereas Pindar and Sophocles at one time set all ablaze in their rush, but the fire is quenched when you least expect it, and they fail most unhappily. Am I not right in saying that no man in his senses, if he put the works of Ion together in a row would value them against a single play, the *Oedipus?*

XXXIV

IF successful passages were to be numbered, not weighed, Hyperides would, on this reckoning, far surpass Demosthenes. He sounds more notes, and has more points of excellence; he wins a second place in pretty well every competition, like the hero of the Pentathlon, being beaten for the first prize by some trained competitor in each, but standing first of the non-professionals. Hyperides certainly, besides matching the successful points in Demosthenes, always excepting composition, has included, over and above these, the virtues and graces of Lysias. He talks with simplicity, when it is required, not in a sustained monotonous manner like Demosthenes, and he shows sense of character, a flavouring added with a light hand; he has indescribable graces, the wit of a man who knows life, good breeding, irony with readiness of fence, jokes not vulgar nor ill-bred as in those great Attic orators, but appropriate, clever raillery, comic power in plenty, the sting which goes with well-aimed fun, and with all this what I may call inimitable charm. He has a strong natural gift for compassion, and also for telling a story fluently, running through a description before a flowing breeze with admirable ease in tacking: for instance, the story of Latona he has treated rather as a poet, the Funeral Speech as a set, perhaps an unmatched, effort of the oratory of display. Demosthenes has no touches of character, no

flowing style ; certainly he is not supple, and cannot speak for display : he lacks the whole list of qualities mentioned above : when he is forced to be witty and smart, he raises a laugh against, rather than with himself ; when he wants to approach charm of manner he passes farthest from it. We may be sure that if he had attempted to write the little speech on *Phryne* or that on *Athenogenes*, he would have established even more firmly the fame of Hyperides. As I see it, the case stands thus :—The beauties of the latter though they be many, are devoid of greatness, dull 'to a sober man's heart,' and allow the hearer to rest unmoved (who feels fear when he reads Hyperides ?) ; Demosthenes 'taking up the tale,' adds excellences of the highest genius and of consummate perfection, sublimity of tone, passions in living embodiment, copiousness, versatility, speed ; also, which is his own prerogative, ability and force beyond approach. Now whereas, I say, he has drawn to himself in one all those marvellous and heaven-sent gifts, for human we may not call them, therefore by the beauties which he has he surpasses all other men and outmatches those which he has not. With his thunder, with his lightning, he bears down the orators of all time ; sooner might one open one's eyes in the face of thunderbolts as they rush, than gaze full upon the passions which follow upon passions in Demosthenes.

XXXV

WHEN we come to Plato, there is, as I said, another kind of pre-eminence. For Lysias, who is far below him in the number, as well as in the magnitude of his good points, is yet more in excess of him in faults than in defect as to good points. What then did those immortals see, the writers who aimed at all which is greatest, and scorned the accuracy which lies in every detail ? They saw many other things, and they also saw this, that Nature determined man to be no low or ignoble animal ; but introducing us into life and this entire universe as into some vast assemblage, to be spectators, in a sort, of her entirety, and most ardent competitors, did then implant in our souls an invincible and

eternal love of that which is great and, by our own standard, more divine. Therefore it is, that for the speculation and thought which are within the scope of human endeavour not all the universe together is sufficient, our conceptions often pass beyond the bounds which limit it; and if a man were to look upon life all round, and see how in all things the extraordinary, the great, the beautiful stand supreme, he will at once know for what ends we have been born. So it is that, as by some physical law, we admire, not surely the little streams, transparent though they be, and useful too, but Nile, or Tiber, or Rhine, and far more than all, Ocean; nor are we awed by this little flame of our kindling, because it keeps its light clear, more than by those heavenly bodies, often obscured though they be, nor think it more marvellous than the craters of Etna, whose eruptions bear up stones and entire masses, and sometimes pour forth rivers of that Titanic and unalloyed fire. Regarding all such things we may say this, that what is serviceable or perhaps necessary to man, man can procure; what passes his thought wins his wonder.

XXXVI

HENCE, when we speak of men of great genius in literature, where the greatness does not necessarily fall outside the needs and service of man, we must at once arrive at the conclusion, that men of this stature, though far removed from flawless perfection, yet all rise above the mortal: other qualities prove those who possess them to be men, sublimity raises them almost to the intellectual greatness of God. No failure, no blame; but greatness has our very wonder. What need still to add, that each of these great men is often seen to redeem all his failures by a sigle sublimity, a single success; and further, which it most convincing, that if we were to pick out all the failures of Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and the other greatest writers, and to mass them together, the result would be a small, an insignificant fraction of the successes which men of that heroic build exhibit everywhere. Therefore every age and all time, which envy itself can never

prove to be in its dotage, has bestowed upon them the assured prizes of victory; it guards and keeps them to this day safe and inalienable, and will as it seems, keep them

As long as waters flow and poplars bloom.

To the writer, however, who objects that the faulty Colossus is not better work than the Spearman of Polycleitus I might say much, but I say this. In Art the most accurate work is admired, in the works of Nature greatness. Now it is by Nature that man is a being endowed with speech; therefore in statues we seek what is like man, in speech what surpasses, as I said, human standards. Yet it is right (for our precept returns to the early words of this treatise), because the success of never failing is in most cases due to Art, the success of high although not uniform excellence, to Genius, that, therefore, Art should ever be brought in to aid Nature; where they are reciprocal the result should be perfection. It was necessary to go thus far towards a decision upon the points raised: let every one take the view which pleases him, and enjoy it.

XXXVII

IN close neighbourhood to Metaphors, for we must go back to them, come Illustrations and Similes, which differ from them in this respect...

[*Here above six pages have been lost.*]

XXXVIII.

SUCH Hyperboles as this are also ludicrous, 'unless you wear your brains in your heels to be trampled down'. Hence we ought to know exactly how far each should go, for sometimes to advance beyond these limits destroys the hyperbole; in such cases extreme tension brings relaxation, and even works right round to its opposite. Thus Isocrates fell into a strange puerility owing to his ambition to amplify at all points. The Argument of his *Panegyricus* is that

the state of the Athenians surpasses that of the Lacedaemonians in services to the Greeks; but at the very beginning he has this :—'Moreover words are so potent, that it is possible thereby to make what is great lowly, and to throw greatness about what is small, and to treat old things in a new fashion, and those which have recently happened in an old fashion.' 'What, Isocrates', some one will say, 'do you mean then to change the parts of the Lacedaemonians and Athenians?' For this set praise of speech goes near to an open warning at the outset not to believe him. Possibly then the best hyperboles, as we said above in speaking of figures, are those which are not noticed as hyperboles at all. This result is obtained when they are uttered in an outburst of strong feeling, and in harmony with a certain grandeur in the crisis described, as where Thucydides is speaking of the men slaughtered in Sicily. 'For the Syracusans', he says, 'also came down and butchered them, but especially those in the water, which was thus immediately spoiled, but which they went on drinking, just the same, mud and all, bloody as it was, even fighting to have it.' That blood and mud were drunk together, and yet were things fought over, passes for credible in the intensity of the feeling and in the crisis. The passage in Herodotus about the men of Thermopylae is similar: 'On this spot', he says, 'while defending themselves with daggers, that is, those who still had them left, and also with hands and with teeth, they were buried alive under the missiles of the Barbarians.' Here 'What sort of thing is it', you will say, 'to fight with very teeth against armed men', or what to be 'buried alive under missiles'? But it passes for true like the other; for the fact does not appear to be introduced for the sake of the hyperbole, but the hyperbole to pass because fathered by the fact. For, as I am never tried of saying, every bold experiment in language finds a solvent and a specific in deeds and passions which approach frenzy. So, in Comedy, utterances which approach the incredible pass for true because of the ludicrous :—

He had a field no bigger than the sheet
Which holds a Spartan letter.

For laughter too is a passion, a passion which lies in pleasure. There is an hyperbole on the side of excess, and also one on the side of defect: the common point is a straining of the truth. And, in a manner of speaking, satire is an exaggeration, namely of pettiness.

XXXIX

THE fifth of the factors which we mentioned at the outset, as contributing to Sublimity, still remains to be considered, my excellent friend; composition in words, or the precise manner of arranging them. I have already published two treatises on this subject, in which I have rendered full account of such theoretical views as I could form; and need, therefore, only add, as necessary for our present purpose, that melody is not only an instrument natural to man, which produces persuasion and pleasure; it is a marvellous instrument, which produces passion, yet leaves him free. Does not the flute implant within the hearers certain passions, and place them out of their senses, full of wild revelry? Does it not set a certain rhythmical step, and force them to keep step with it, and to conform themselves to the air, though a man have 'no music in him'? Do not the notes of the harp, which in themselves singnify nothing, yet by the interchange of sounds, the mutual accompaniment, the mingled harmony, cast upon us a spell, which is, you well know, often marvellous; although these are but images and bastard copies of persuasion, not genuine forces operative upon human nature? And then are we not to think that composition—being as it is, a special melody of words, words which are in man by nature and which reach his very soul, and not his ears alone; stirring, as it does, manifold ideas of words, thoughts, actions, beauty, tunefulness, all of them things born and bred within us; carrying moreover, by the very commixture and multiplicity of its own sounds, the passion which is present to the speaker into the souls of the bystanders, and bringing them into partnership with himself; building phrase on phrase and so shaping whole passages of greatness—that Composition, I say, must by all

dignified

these means at once soothe us as we hear and also dispose to stateliness, and high mood, and sublimity, and everything which it contains with itself, in each and every direction gaining the mastery over minds? Although it is mere folly to raise problems about things which are so fully admitted, for experience is proof sufficient, I am sure that you will think that a sublime thought, and marvellous indeed it is, which Demosthenes applied to his decree :—'This decree made the danger, which then encompassed the city, to pass away like a vapour.' But the harmony of the thought, no less than the thought itself, has given it voice. For the whole expression rests upon the dactylic rhythms, the most noble and productive of grandeur, which make the structure of heroic metre the noblest known to us. Take any word out of its own place, and transfer it where you will :—'This proposal, like a vapour, made the danger of that day to pass away'; or, again, cut off one syllable only :—'made it to pass like vapour'; and you will learn how closely the rhythm echoes the sublimity. For the actual phrase 'like a vapour' moves with the first rhythm long, if measured by four times. Cut out the one syllable, you have 'as vapour', the curtailment mutilates the grandeur; as, on the other hand, if you lengthen it out, 'made to pass away like to a vapour', the sense is the same, but not the effect on the ear, because by the length of the times at the end of the phrase, its sheer sublimity is broken up and unstrung.

XL

LANGUAGE is made grand in the highest degree by that which corresponds to the collocation of limbs in the body, of which no one, if cut off from another, has anything noticeable in itself, yet all in combination produce a perfect structure. So great passages, when separate and scattered in different parts, scatter also the sublimity; but if they are formed by partnership into a body, and also enclosed by the bond of rhythm, the limits which encircle them give them new voice; one might put it that grand effects within a period contribute to a common fund of

grandeur. However it has been already shown that many prose writers and poets of no natural sublimity, possibly themselves altogether wanting in grandeur, and using in general common and popular words, such as contribute nothing remarkable, have yet, by mere arrangement and adjustment, attained a real dignity and distinction of style, in which no pettiness is apparent; so, amongst many others, Philistus, Aristophanes in certain passages, Euripides in most. After the murder of his children Hercules cries:—

I am full fraught with ills—no stowing more.

The phrase is quite popular, but has become sublime because the handling of the words conforms to the subject. If you place the words in other combinations, you will see clearly that Euripides is a poet of composition rather than of intellect. When Dirce is being dragged away by the bull:—

Where'er it chanced,
Rolling around he with him ever drew
Wife, oak-tree, rock, in constant interchange.

The conception in itself is a noble one, but has become more forcible from the rhythm not being hurried, not borne along as on rollers; the words are solidly attached to one another, and checks caused by the syllabic quantities, which result in stability and grandeur.

XLI

THERE is nothing which introduces pettiness into sublime passages so much as a broken and excited rhythm, as pyrrhics, trochees, and dichorees, which fall into a thorough dancing measure. For in prose complete rhythm appears dainty and trivial, and entirely lacks passion, because the sameness makes it superficial. The worst point of all about this is, that, as ballad-music draws away the hearers perforce from the subject to itself, so prose which is made over-rhythmical does not give the hearers the effect of the prose but that of the rhythm; so that in

some cases, knowing beforehand the endings as they become due, people actually beat time with the speakers, and get before them, and render the movement too soon, as though in a dance. Equally devoid of grandeur are passages which lie too close, cut up into scraps and minute syllables, and bound together by clamps between piece and piece in the way of socket and insertion.

XLII

ANOTHER means of lowering sublimity is excessive conciseness of expression ; a grand phrase is maimed when it is gathered into too short a compass. I must be understood to refer not to mere undue compression, but to what is absolutely small and comminuted : contraction stunts the sense, a short cut goes straight. In the other direction it is clear that what is spun out is lifeless, all 'which conjures up unseasonable length'.

XLIII

PETTINESS of words, again, is strangely potent in making fine passages mean. Thus in Herodotus the storm has been described with great spirit, so far as the ideas go, but certain words are included which are surely too ignoble for the subject ; this in particular, 'when the sea boiled', the word 'boiled' greatly spoils the sublimity, being so poor in sound ; then he has 'the wind flagged', and again 'Those who were about the wreck and clutching it met an unwelcome end', 'flagged' is an undignified vulgarism, and 'unwelcome' is an inadequate word for such a disaster. So also Theopompus, in a brilliant and elaborate account of the descent of the Persian army upon Egypt, by a few paltry words has spoilt the whole passage:—'For what city of Asia, or what tribe, did not send envoys to the King ? What beautiful or costly thing which earth grows, or art produces, was not brought as a gift to him ? Were there not many and costly coverlets and cloaks, purple, and variegated, and white pieces, and many tents of gold, furnished with all things serviceable ;

many costly robes and couches? There were also vessels of wrought gold and silver, drinking cups and bowls, of which you might have seen some crusted with precious stones, others worked with elaborate and costly art: besides these were untold quantities of arms, some Greek, some barbarian, beasts of burden in exceedingly great numbers, and victims fatted for slaughter, many bushels of spices, many sacks and bags and sheets of papyrus and all other commodities; and so many pickled carcasses of all sorts of animals, that the size of the heaps made those who approached from a distance think that they were mounds and hillocks as they jostled one another'. He runs off from the loftier to the more humble details, whereas he ought to have made his description rise in the other direction. With his marvellous account of the whole provision he has mixed up his bags and spices, and has drawn to the imagination—a cook-shop! Suppose one had really placed among those things of show, the gold and the gem-crusted cups and the silver vessels, and tents all golden, common bags and sacks, the effect to the eye would have been unseemly; so in a description each of such words placed there out of season is an ugliness and, so to say, a blot where it stands. It was open to him to go through all in broad outline: as he has told us of heaps taken to be hillocks, so he might have given us all the rest of the pageant, camels, a multitude of beasts of burden carrying all supplies for luxury and the enjoyment of the table, or he might have specified heaps of every sort of grain and of all that is best for confectionery and daintiness; or, if he meant, at all costs, to put the whole down in an inclusive list, he might have said 'all the dainties known to victuallers and confectioners'. For we ought not in sublime passages to stoop to mean and discredited terms unless we are compelled by some strong necessity; but it would be proper even in words to keep to those which sound worthy of the subject, and to copy Nature who fashioned man; for she did not place our less honourable parts in front, nor the purgings of all gross matter, but hid them away so far as she could, and, as Xenophon tells us, removed the channels of such things to as great a distance

as possible, nowhere disfiguring the beauty of the whole animal. But there is no present need to enumerate by their kinds the means of producing pettiness; when we have once shown what things make writings noble and sublime, it is clear that their opposites will make them in most cases low and uncouth.

XLIV

ONE point remains, which in view of your diligence in learning, I shall not hesitate to add. This is to give a clear answer to a question lately put to me by one of our philosophers: 'I wonder', he said, 'as assuredly do many others, how it is that in our age we have men whose genius is persuasive and charming in the extreme, keen and versatile; but minds of a high order of sublimity and greatness are no longer produced, or quite exceptionally, such is the worldwide barrenness of literature that now pervades our life. Are we indeed', he went on, 'to believe the common voice, that democracy is a good nurse of all that is great; that with free government nearly all powerful orators attained their prime, and died out with it? For Freedom, they say, has the power of breeding noble spirits; it gives them hopes, and passes hand in hand with them through their eager mutual strife and their ambition to reach the first prizes. Further, because of the prizes offered to competition in commonwealths, the intellectual gifts of orators are kept in exercise and whetted by use; the rub of politics, if I may use the word, kindles them to fire; they shine, as shine they must, with the light of public freedom. But we in our day', he went on, 'seem to be from childhood scholars of a dutiful slavery; in its customs and practices we are enwrapped and swathed from the very infancy of our thoughts, never tasting that fairest and most abundant fount of eloquence, I mean Freedom; wherefore we turn out nothing but flatterers of portentous growth'. Other faculties, he arrested, might be the portion of mere household servants, but no slave becomes an orator; for instantly there surges up the helplessness to speak out,

there is the guard on the lips enforced by the cudgel of habitude. As Homer has it :—

> *Half that man's virtue doth Zeus take away,*
> *Whom he surrenders to the servile day.'*

'As then', he went on, 'if what I hear is to be believed, the cages in which the Pygmies, also called dwarfs, are reared, not only hinder the growth of those who are shut up in them, but actually shrivel them because of the bonds lying about their bodies, so one might show that all slavery, though it be never so dutiful, is a cage of the soul and a public prison.' Here I rejoined : 'Sir,' I said, 'it is easy, and it is man's special habit, always to find fault with things present : but consider whether it may not be that what spoils noble natures is, not the peace of the universal world, but much rather this war which masters our desires, and to which no bonds are set, aye, and more than that, these passions which keep our life a prisoner and make spoil of it altogether ? The love of money, which cannot be satisfied and is a disease with us all, and the love of pleasure both lead us into slavery, or rather, as one might put it, thrust our lives and ourselves down into the depths : the love of money, a disease which makes us little, the love of pleasure, which is utterly ignoble. I try to reckon it up, but I cannot discover how it is possible that we who so greatly honour boundless wealth, who, to speak more truly, make it a god, can fail to receive into our souls the kindred evils which enter with it. There follows on unmeasured and unchecked wealth, bound to it and keeping step for step, as they say, costliness of living ; which, when wealth opens the way into cities and houses, enters and settles therein. When these evils have passed much time in our lives, they build nests, the wise tell us, and soon proceed to breed and engender boasting, and vapouring, and luxury ; no spurious brood, but all too truly their own. If the children of such wealth are allowed to come to maturity, straightway they engender in the souls inexorable masters—insolence, and lawlessness, and effrontery. For this must perforce

be so; men will no longer look up, nor otherwise take any account of good reputation; little by little the ruin of their whole life is effected; all greatness of soul dwindles and withers, and ceases to be emulated, while men admire their own mortal parts, and neglect to improve the immortal. A judge bribed for his verdict could never be a free and sound judge of things just and good, for to the corrupted judge the side which he is to take must needs appear good and just. Even so, where bribes already rule our whole lives, and the hunt for other men's deaths, and the lying in wait for their wills, and where we purchase with our soul gain from wherever it comes: led captive each by his own luxury, do we really expect, amidst this ruin and undoing of our life, that any is yet left a free and uncorrupted judge of great things and things which reach to eternity; and that we are not downright bribed by our desire to better ourselves? For such men as we are, it may possibly be better to be governed than to be free; since greed and grasping, if let loose together against our neighbours, as beasts out of a den, would soon deluge the world with evils.' I gave the general explanation that what eats up our modern characters is the indolence in which, with few exceptions, we all now live, never working or undertaking work save for the sake of praise or of pleasure, instead of that assistance to others which is a thing worthy of emulation and of honour.

'Best leave such things to take their chance', and pass we to the next topic; this was to be the passions, about which I promised beforehand to write in a separate paper, inasmuch as they cover a side of the general subject of speech, and of sublimity in particular.

Selected Questions on Longinus

Q.1 Consider the relative merits of the five sources of sublimity as set forth by Longinus.

Q.2 Comment on Longinus' psychological analysis of the pleasure derived from great literature.

Q.3 "The sublime is great thought expressed with enthusiasm that belong to it." (John Dennis)

Can this be regarded as an adequate account of what Longinus meant by Sublime ?

Q.4 "Longinus seems to have great sensibility but little discrimination. Having no fixed standard, he is right only by accident. He is rather a fancier than a critic." (Lord Macaulay.) Is it a correct opinion about Longinus ?

Q.5 Appreciate Longinus' Sublime as a romantic variation of rhetoric.

Q.6 What according to Longinus are the sources of sublimity ? Discuss with illustrative examples.

Q.7 Longinus is regarded as the first romantic critic. How far do you agree with this view ?

Q.8 Estimate Longinus as a literary critic.

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